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THE
HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND.

FROM THE
INVASION OF JULIUS CÆSAR

TO
The REVOLUTION in 1688.

By DAVID HUME, Esq;

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. I.

BASIL:

PRINTED BY J. J. TOURNEISEN.

PARIS:

SOLD BY PISSOT, BOOKSELLER, Quai des Augustins.

MDCCLXXXIX.

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MY OWN

L I F E.

IT is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore, I shall be short. It may be thought an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my life; but this Narrative shall contain little more than the History of my Writings; as, indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity.

I WAS born the 26th of April 1711, old style, at Edinburgh. I was of a good family, both by father and mother: my father's family is a branch of the Earl of Home's or Hume's; and my ancestors had been proprietors of the estate, which my brother possesses, for several generations. My mother was daughter of Sir David Falconer, President of the College of Justice: the title of Lord Halkerton came by succession to her brother.

My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man

of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments. My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an unfurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.

My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me. I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life, which I have

steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.

DURING my retreat in France, first at Reims, but chiefly at La Fleche, in Anjou, I composed my *Treatise of Human Nature*. After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737. In the end of 1738, I published my *Treatise*, and immediately went down to my mother and my brother, who lived at his country-house, and was employing himself very judiciously and successfully in the improvement of his fortune.

NEVER literary attempt was more unfortunate than my *Treatise of Human Nature*. It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots. But being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I very soon recovered the blow, and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country. In 1742, I printed at Edinburgh the first part of my *Essays*: the work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in

that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.

IN 1745, I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England; I found also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. — I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune. I then received an invitation from General St. Clair to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France. Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aide-de-camp to the general, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life: I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune,

which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so: in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.

I HAD always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the treatise of Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I, therefore, cast the first part of that work anew in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the Treatise of Human Nature. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's Free Enquiry, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been published at London, of my Essays, moral and political, met not with a much better reception.

SUCH is the source of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country-house, for my mother was now dead. I there composed the second part of my Essays, which I called Political Discourses, and also my Enquiry concerning the

Principles of Morals, which is another part of my treatise, that I cast anew. Meanwhile, my bookfeller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends, and Right Reverends, came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company. However, I had fixed a resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to any body; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of all literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favourable than unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a-year.

IN 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters. In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my Political Discourses, the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published at London,

my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals; which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject) is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world.

IN 1752, the Faculty of Advocates chose me their librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the History of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the accession of the House of Stuart, an epoch when, I thought, the misrepresentations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian, that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, freethinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the

man, who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the earl of Strafford, and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

I was, however, I confess, discouraged, and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere.

In this interval, I published at London my Natural History of Religion, along with some other small pieces: its public entry was rather obscure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, with all the illiberal petulance,

arrogance, and scurrility, which distinguish the Warburtonian school. This pamphlet gave me some consolation for the otherwise indifferent reception of my performance.

IN 1756, two years after the fall of the first volume, was published the second volume of my history, containing the period from the death of Charles I. till the Revolution. This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother.

BUT though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty.

IN 1759, I published my History of the House of Tudor. The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two first Stuarts. The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious. But I was now callous against the impressions of public folly,

and continued very peaceably and contentedly in my retreat at Edinburgh, to finish, in two volumes, the more early part of the English History, which I gave to the public in 1761, with tolerable, and but tolerable success.

BUT, notwithstanding this variety of winds and seasons, to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances, that the copy-money given me by the booksellers, much exceeded any thing formerly known in England; I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all the rest of my life in this philosophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an invitation from the Earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the least acquainted, to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a near prospect of being appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at first declined, both because I was reluctant to begin connexions with the great, and because I was afraid that the civilities and

gay company of Paris, would prove disagreeable to a person of my age and humour: but on his lordship's repeating the invitation, I accepted of it. I have every reason, both of pleasure and interest, to think myself happy in my connexions with that nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother, General Conway.

THOSE who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I refused from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real satisfaction in living at Paris, from the great number of sensible, knowing and polite company with which that city abounds above all places in the universe. I thought once of settling there for life.

I was appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in summer 1765, Lord Hertford left me, being appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I was *Chargé d'affaires* till the arrival of the Duke of Richmond, towards the end of the year. In the beginning of 1766, I left Paris, and next summer went to Edinburgh, with the same view as formerly, of burying myself in a philosophical retreat. I returned to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means

of Lord Hertford's friendship, than I left it; and I was desirous of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But in 1767, I received from Mr. Conway an invitation to be Under-secretary; and this invitation, both the character of the person, and my connexions with Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining. I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of 1000 l. a-year), healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation.

IN spring 1775, I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits; infomuch, that were I to name a period of my life, which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this later period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company. I consider besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities;

and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at last with additional lustre, I knew that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

To conclude historically with my own character, I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men, any wise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never

had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: Not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage; but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

April 18, 1776.

LETTER

LETTER

FROM

ADAM SMITH, LL.D.

TO

WILLIAM STRAHAN, Esq.

Kirkaldy, Fifeshire, Nov. 9, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

IT is with a real, though a very melancholy pleasure, that I sit down to give you some account of the behaviour of our late excellent friend, Mr. Hume, during his last illness.

THOUGH, in his own judgment, his disease was mortal and incurable, yet he allowed himself to be prevailed upon, by the entreaty of his friends, to try what might be the effects of a long journey. A few days before he set out, he wrote that account of his own life, which, together with his other papers, he has left to your care. My account, therefore, shall begin where his ends.

He set out for London towards the end of April, and at Morpeth met with Mr. John Home

and myself, who had both come down from London on purpose to see him, expecting to have found him at Edinburgh. Mr. Home returned with him, and attended him during the whole of his stay in England, with that care and attention which might be expected from a temper so perfectly friendly and affectionate. As I had written to my mother that she might expect me in Scotland, I was under the necessity of continuing my journey. His disease seemed to yield to exercise and change of air, and when he arrived in London, he was apparently in much better health than when he left Edinburgh. He was advised to go to Bath to drink the waters, which appeared for some time to have so good an effect upon him, that even he himself began to entertain, what he was not apt to do, a better opinion of his own health. His symptoms, however, soon returned with their usual violence, and from that moment he gave up all thoughts of recovery, but submitted with the utmost cheerfulness, and the most perfect complacency and resignation. Upon his return to Edinburgh, though he found himself much weaker, yet his cheerfulness never abated, and he continued to divert himself, as usual, with correcting his own works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends; and, sometimes in the evening, with a party at his favourite game of

whilst. His cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements run so much in their usual strain, that, notwithstanding all bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying. "I shall tell your friend, Colonel Edmondstone," said Doctor Dundas to him one day, "that I left you much better, and in a fair way of recovery." "Doctor," said he, "as I believe you would not chuse to tell any thing but the truth, you had better tell him, that I am dying as fast as my enemies, if I have any, could wish, and as easily and cheerfully as my best friends could desire." Colonel Edmondstone soon afterwards came to see him, and take leave of him; and on his way home, he could not forbear writing him a letter bidding him once more an eternal adieu, and applying to him, as to a dying man, the beautiful French verses in which the Abbé Chaulieu, in expectation of his own death, laments his approaching separation from his friend, the Marquis de la Fare. Mr. Hume's magnanimity and firmness were such, that his most affectionate friends knew, that they hazarded nothing in talking or writing to him as to a dying man, and that so far from being hurt by this frankness, he was rather pleased and flattered by it. I happened to come into his room while he was reading this letter, which he had just received, and which he immediately showed

me. I told him, that though I was sensible how very much he was weakened, and that appearances were in many respects very bad, yet his cheerfulness was still so great, the spirit of life seemed still to be so very strong in him, that I could not help entertaining some faint hopes. He answered, "Your hopes are groundless. An habitual diarrhoea of more than a year's standing, would be a very bad disease at any age: At my age it is a mortal one. When I lie down in the evening, I feel myself weaker than when I rose in the morning; and when I rise in the morning, weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am sensible, besides, that some of my vital parts are affected, so that I must soon die." "Well," said I, "if it must be so, you have at least the satisfaction of leaving all your friends, your brother's family in particular, in great prosperity." He said, that he felt that satisfaction so sensibly, that when he was reading, a few days before, Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, among all the excuses which are alleged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him; he had no house to finish, he had no daughter to provide for, he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. "I could not well imagine," said he, "what excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done

“every thing of consequence which I ever meant
“to do, and I could at no time expect to leave
“my relations and friends in a better situation
“than that in which I am now likely to leave
“them: I, therefore, have all reason to die con-
“tented.” He then diverted himself with invent-
ing several jocular excuses, which he supposed
he might make to Charon, and with imagining
the very furly answers which it might suit the
character of Charon to return to them. “Upon
“further consideration,” said he, “I thought I
“might say to him, Good Charon, I have been
“correcting my works for a new edition. Allow
“me a little time, that I may see how the Public
“receives the alterations.” But Charon would
answer, “When you have seen the effect of these,
“you will be for making other alterations. There
“will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend,
“please step into the boat.” But I might still
urge, “Have a little patience, good Charon, I
“have been endeavouring to open the eyes of
“the Public. If I live a few years longer, I may
“have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of
“some of the prevailing systems of superstition.”
But Charon would then lose all temper and de-
cency. “You loitering rogue, that will not
“happen these many hundred years. Do you
“fancy I will grant you a leave for so long a

“term ? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue.”

BUT, though Mr. Hume always talked of his approaching dissolution with great cheerfulness, he never affected to make any parade of his magnanimity. He never mentioned the subject but when the conversation naturally led to it, and never dwelt longer upon it than the course of the conversation happened to require: it was a subject indeed which occurred pretty frequently, in consequence of the enquiries which his friends, who came to see him, naturally made concerning the state of his health. The conversation which I mentioned above, and which passed on Thursday the 8th of August, was the last, except one, that I ever had with him. He had now become so very weak, that the company of his most intimate friends fatigued him; for his cheerfulness was still so great, his complaisance and social disposition were still so entire, that when any friend was with him, he could not help talking more, and with greater exertion, than suited the weakness of his body. At his own desire, therefore, I agreed to leave Edinburgh, where I was staying partly upon his account, and returned to my mother's house here, at Kirkaldy, upon condition that he would send for me whenever he wished to see me; the physician who saw him most frequently, Doctor Black, undertaking, in the mean time,

to write me occasionally an account of the state of his health.

ON the 22d of August, the Doctor wrote me the following letter :

“SINCE my last, Mr. Hume has passed his time pretty easily, but is much weaker. He sits up, goes down stairs once a day, and amuses himself with reading, but seldom sees any body. He finds, that even the conversation of his most intimate friends fatigues and oppresses him; and it is happy that he does not need it, for he is quite free from anxiety, impatience, or low spirits, and passes his time very well with the assistance of amusing books.”

I RECEIVED the day after a letter from Mr. Hume himself, of which the following is an extract.

Edinburgh, 23d August, 1776.

“MY DEAREST FRIEND,

“I AM obliged to make use of my nephew’s hand in writing to you, as I do not rise to-day.

* * * * *

I GO very fast to decline, and last night had a small fever, which I hoped might put a quicker period to this tedious illness; but unluckily it has, in a great measure, gone off. I cannot submit to your coming over here on my account, as it is possible for me to see you so small a part of the day, but Doctor Black can better inform

you concerning the degree of strength which may from time to time remain with me. Adieu, &c."

THREE days after I received the following letter from Doctor Black.

Edinburgh, Monday, 26th August, 1776.

"DEAR SIR,

"YESTERDAY about four o'clock afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much, that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, especially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you, desiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such a happy composure of mind, that nothing could exceed it."

THUS died our most excellent, and never to be forgotten friend; concerning whose philosophical opinions men will, no doubt, judge variously, every one approving, or condemning them, according as they happen to coincide or disagree with his own; but concerning whose

character and conduct there can scarce be a difference of opinion. His temper, indeed, seemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed such an expression, than that perhaps of any other man I have ever known. Even in the lowest state of his fortune, his great and necessary frugality never hindered him from exercising, upon proper occasions, acts both of charity and generosity. It was a frugality founded not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleness of his nature never weakened either the firmness of his mind, or the steadiness of his resolutions. His constant pleasantry was the genuine effusion of good-nature and good-humor, tempered with delicacy and modesty, and without even the slightest tincture of malignity, so frequently the disagreeable source of what is called wit in other men. It never was the meaning of his raillery to mortify; and therefore, far from offending, it seldom failed to please and delight, even those who were the objects of it. To his friends, who were frequently the objects of it, there was not perhaps any one of all his great and amiable qualities, which contributed more to endear his conversation. And that gaiety of temper, so agreeable in society, but which is so often accompanied with frivolous and superficial qualities, was in him certainly attended with the most severe application, the most extensive learn-

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ing, the greatest depth of thought, and a capacity in every respect the most comprehensive. Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.

I ever am, dear Sir,

Most affectionately your's,

ADAM SMITH.

C O N T E N T S

O F T H E

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THE

THE
HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND.

CHAP. I.

*The Britons, — Romans, — Saxons, — the Heptarchy.
— The Kingdom of Kent — of Northumberland —
of East - Anglia — of Mercia — of Essex — of
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The BRITONS.

THE curiosity, entertained by all civilized nations, of enquiring into the exploits and adventures of their ancestors, commonly excites a regret that the history of remote ages should always be so much involved in obscurity, uncertainty, and contradiction. Ingenious men, possessed of leisure, are apt to push their researches beyond the period, in which literary monuments are framed or preserved; without reflecting, that the history of past events is immediately lost or disfigured, when intrusted to memory and oral

CHAP.
I.

C H A P. I. tradition, and that the adventures of barbarous nations, even if they were recorded, could afford little or no entertainment to men born in a more cultivated age. The convulsions of a civilized state usually compose the most instructive and most interesting part of its history; but the sudden, violent, and unprepared revolutions, incident to Barbarians, are so much guided by caprice, and terminate so often in cruelty, that they disgust us by the uniformity of their appearance; and it is rather fortunate for letters that they are buried in silence and oblivion. The only certain means, by which nations can indulge their curiosity in researches concerning their remote origin, is to consider the language, manners, and customs of their ancestors, and to compare them with those of the neighbouring nations. The fables, which are commonly employed to supply the place of true history, ought entirely to be disregarded; or if any exception be admitted to this general rule, it can only be in favour of the ancient Grecian fictions, which are so celebrated and so agreeable, that they will ever be the objects of the attention of mankind. Neglecting, therefore, all traditions or rather tales concerning the more early history of Britain, we shall only consider the state of the inhabitants, as it appeared to the Romans on their invasion of this country: We shall briefly run over the events, which attended the conquest made by that empire, as belonging more to Roman than British story: We shall hasten through the obscure and uninteresting period of Saxon

annals : And shall reserve a more full narration for
those times , when the truth is both so well
ascertained and so complete as to promise enter-
tainment and instruction to the reader.

C H A P.
I.

ALL ancient writers agree in representing the first inhabitants of Britain as a tribe of the Gauls or Celtæ , who peopled that island from the neighbouring continent. Their language was the same , their manners , their government , their superstition ; varied only by those small differences , which time or a communication with the bordering nations must necessarily introduce. The inhabitants of Gaul , especially in those parts which lie contiguous to Italy , had acquired , from a commerce with their southern neighbours , some refinement in the arts , which gradually diffused themselves northwards , and spread but a very faint light over this island. The Greek and Roman navigators or merchants (for there were scarcely any other travellers in those ages) brought back the most shocking accounts of the ferocity of the people , which they magnified , as usual , in order to excite the admiration of their countrymen. The south-east parts , however , of Britain had already , before the age of Cæsar , made the first and most requisite step towards a civil settlement ; and the Britons , by tillage and agriculture , had there increased to a great multitude ¹. The other inhabitants of the island still maintained themselves by pasture : They were clothed with skins of beasts : They dwelt in huts , which they

¹ Cæsar , lib. 4.

C H A P. I. reared in the forests and marshes, with which the country was covered: They shifted easily their habitation, when actuated either by the hopes of plunder or the fear of an enemy: The convenience of feeding their cattle was even a sufficient motive for removing their seats: And as they were ignorant of all the refinements of life, their wants and their possessions were equally scanty and limited.

THE Britons were divided into many small nations or tribes; and being a military people, whose sole property was their arms and their cattle, it was impossible, after they had acquired a relish of liberty, for their princes or chieftains to establish any despotic authority over them. Their governments, though monarchical², were free, as well as those of all the Celtic nations; and the common people seem even to have enjoyed more liberty among them³, than among the nations of Gaul⁴, from whom they were descended. Each state was divided into factions within itself⁵: It was agitated with jealousy or animosity against the neighbouring states: And while the arts of peace were yet unknown, wars were the chief occupation, and formed the chief object of ambition, among the people.

THE religion of the Britons was one of the most considerable parts of their government; and the Druids, who were their priests, possessed

² Diod. Sic. lib. 4. Mela, lib. 3. cap. 6. Strabo, lib. 4.

³ Dion Cassius, lib. 75. ⁴ Cæsar, lib. 6.

⁵ Tacit. Agr.

great authority among them. Besides ministering at the altar, and directing all religious duties, they presided over the education of youth; they enjoyed an immunity from wars and taxes; they possessed both the civil and criminal jurisdiction; they decided all controversies among states as well as among private persons, and whoever refused to submit to their decree was exposed to the most severe penalties. The sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him: He was forbidden access to the sacrifices or public worship: He was debarred all intercourse with his fellow-citizens, even in the common affairs of life: His company was universally shunned, as profane and dangerous: He was refused the protection of law⁶: And death itself became to him an acceptable relief from the misery and infamy to which he was exposed. Thus, the bands of government, which were naturally loose among that rude and turbulent people, were happily corroborated by the terrors of their superstition.

No species of superstition was ever more terrible than that of the Druids. Besides the severe penalties, which it was in the power of the ecclesiastics to inflict in this world, they inculcated the eternal transmigration of souls; and thereby extended their authority as far as the fears of their timorous votaries. They practised their rites in dark groves or other secret recesses⁷; and in order to throw a greater mystery over their religion, they communicated their doctrines only to the initiated,

⁶ Cæsar, lib. 6. Strabo, lib. 4.

⁷ Plin. lib. 12. cap. 1.

C H A P.

I.

and strictly forbade the committing of them to writing, lest they should at any time be exposed to the examination of the profane vulgar. Human sacrifices were practised among them: The spoils of war were often devoted to their divinities; and they punished with the severest tortures whoever dared to secrete any part of the consecrated offering: These treasures they kept in woods and forests, secured by no other guard than the terrors of their religion^s; and this steady conquest over human avidity may be regarded as more signal than their prompting men to the most extraordinary and most violent efforts. No idolatrous worship ever attained such an ascendant over mankind as that of the ancient Gauls and Britons; and the Romans, after their conquest, finding it impossible to reconcile those nations to the laws and institutions of their masters, while it maintained its authority, were at last obliged to abolish it by penal statutes; a violence, which had never in any other instance been practised by those tolerating conquerors^s.

The R O M A N S.

THE Britons had long remained in this rude but independent state, when Cæsar, having over-run all Gaul by his victories, first cast his eye on their island. He was not allured either by its riches or its renown; but being ambitious of

^s Cæsar, lib. 6.

^s Sueton. in Vita Claudii.

carrying the Roman arms into a new world, then mostly unknown, he took advantage of a short interval in his Gaulic wars, and made an invasion on Britain. The natives, informed of his intention, were sensible of the unequal contest, and endeavoured to appease him by submissions, which, however, retarded not the execution of his design. After some resistance, he landed, as is supposed, at Deal; and having obtained several advantages over the Britons, and obliged them to promise hostages for their future obedience, he was constrained, by the necessity of his affairs, and the approach of winter, to withdraw his forces into Gaul. The Britons, relieved from the terror of his arms, neglected the performance of their stipulations; and that haughty conqueror resolved next summer to chastise them for this breach of treaty. He landed with a greater force; and though he found a more regular resistance from the Britons, who had united under Cassivelaunus, one of their petty princes, he discomfited them in every action. He advanced into the country; passed the Thames in the face of the enemy; took and burned the capital of Cassivelaunus; established his ally, Mandubratius, in the sovereignty of the Trinobantes; and having obliged the inhabitants to make him new submissions, he again returned with his army into Gaul, and left the authority of the Romans more nominal than real in this island.

Anno ante
C. 55.

THE civil wars, which ensued, and which prepared the way for the establishment of monarchy

CHAP. I. in Rome, saved the Britons from that yoke, which was ready to be imposed upon them. Augustus, the successor of Cæsar, content with the victory obtained over the liberties of his own country, was little ambitious of acquiring fame by foreign wars; and being apprehensive lest the same unlimited extent of dominion, which had subverted the republic, might also overwhelm the empire, he recommended it to his successors never to enlarge the territories of the Romans. Tiberius, jealous of the fame, which might be acquired by his generals, made this advice of Augustus a pretence for his inactivity¹⁰. The mad follies of Caligula, in which he menaced Britain with an invasion, served only to expose himself and the empire to ridicule: And the Britons had now, during almost a century, enjoyed their liberty unmolested; when the Romans, in the reign of Claudius, began to think seriously of reducing them under their dominion. Without seeking any more justifiable reasons of hostility than were employed by the later Europeans in subjecting the Africans and Americans, they sent over an army under the command of Plautius, an able general, who gained some victories, and made a considerable progress in subduing the inhabitants. Claudius himself, finding matters sufficiently prepared for his reception, made a journey into Britain; and received the submission of several British states, the Cantii, Atrebates, Regni, and Trinobantes, who inhabited the

A. D. 43.

¹⁰ Tacit. Agr.

fourth-east parts of the island, and whom their possessions and more cultivated manner of life rendered willing to purchase peace at the expence of their liberty. The other Britons, under the command of Caractacus, still maintained an obstinate resistance, and the Romans made little progress against them; till Ostorius Scapula was sent over to command their armies. This general advanced the Roman conquests over the Britons; pierced into the country of the Silures, a warlike nation, who inhabited the banks of the Severne; defeated Caractacus in a great battle; took him prisoner, and sent him to Rome, where his magnanimous behaviour procured him better treatment than those conquerors usually bestowed on captive princes¹¹.

C. H. A. P.
I.

A. D. 50.

NOTWITHSTANDING these misfortunes, the Britons were not subdued; and this island was regarded by the ambitious Romans as a field in which military honour might still be acquired. Under the reign of Nero, Suetonius Paulinus was invested with the command, and prepared to signalize his name by victories over those barbarians. Finding that the island of Mona, now Anglesey, was the chief seat of the Druids, he resolved to attack it, and to subject a place, which was the center of their superstition, and which afforded protection to all their baffled forces. The Britons endeavoured to obstruct his landing on this sacred island, both by the force of their arms and the terrors of their religion.

A. D. 59.

¹¹ Tacit. Ann. lib. 12.

CHAP.

I.

The women and priests were intermingled with the soldiers upon the shore; and running about with flaming torches in their hands, and tossing their dishevelled hair, they struck greater terror into the astonished Romans by their howlings, cries, and execrations, than the real danger from the armed forces was able to inspire. But Suetonius, exhorting his troops to despise the menaces of a superstition, which they despised, impelled them to the attack, drove the Britons off the field, burned the Druids in the same fires which those priests had prepared for their captive enemies, destroyed all the consecrated groves and altars; and, having thus triumphed over the religion of the Britons, he thought his future progress would be easy, in reducing the people to subjection. But he was disappointed in his expectations. The Britons, taking advantage of his absence, were all in arms; and headed by Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, who had been treated in the most ignominious manner by the Roman tribunes, had already attacked with success several settlements of their insulting conquerors. Suetonius hastened to the protection of London, which was already a flourishing Roman colony; but he found on his arrival, that it would be requisite for the general safety to abandon that place to the merciless fury of the enemy. London was reduced to ashes; such of the inhabitants as remained in it, were cruelly massacred; the Romans and all strangers, to the number of 70,000, were every where put to the sword without distinction; and the Britons, by rendering

the war thus bloody, seemed determined to cut off all hopes of peace or composition with the enemy. But this cruelty was revenged by Suetonius in a great and decisive battle, where 80,000 of the Britons are said to have perished; and Boadicea herself, rather than fall into the hands of the enraged victor, put an end to her own life by poison ¹². Nero soon after recalled Suetonius from a government, where, by suffering and inflicting so many severities, he was judged improper for composing the angry and alarmed minds of the inhabitants. After some interval, Cerealis received the command from Vespasian, and by his bravery propagated the terror of the Roman arms. Julius Frontinus succeeded Cerealis both in authority and in reputation: But the general, who finally established the dominion of the Romans in this island, was Julius Agricola, who governed it in the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and distinguished himself in that scene of action.

THIS great commander formed a regular plan for subduing Britain, and rendering the acquisition useful to the conquerors. He carried his victorious arms northwards, defeated the Britons in every encounter, pierced into the inaccessible forests and mountains of Caledonia, reduced every state to subjection in the southern parts of the island, and chased before him all the men of fiercer and more intractable spirits, who deemed war and death itself less intolerable than servitude

¹² Tacit. Ann. lib. 14.

C H A P. under the victors. He even defeated them in a
I. decisive action, which they fought under Galgacus,
their leader; and having fixed a chain of garrisons,
between the friths of Clyde and Forth, he thereby
cut off the ruder and more barren parts of the
island, and secured the Roman province from the
incursions of the barbarous inhabitants ¹³.

DURING these military enterprizes, he neglected
not the arts of peace. He introduced laws and
civility among the Britons, taught them to desire
and raise all the conveniencies of life, reconciled
them to the Roman language and manners,
instructed them in letters and science, and em-
ployed every expedient to render those chains,
which he had forged, both easy and agreeable to
them ¹⁴. The inhabitants, having experienced
how unequal their own force was to resist that of
the Romans, acquiesced in the dominion of their
masters, and were gradually incorporated as a
part of that mighty empire.

THIS was the last durable conquest made by
the Romans; and Britain, once subdued, gave
no farther inquietude to the victor. Caledonia
alone, defended by its barren mountains, and
by the contempt which the Romans entertained for
it, sometimes infested the more cultivated parts
of the island by the incursions of its inhabitants.
The better to secure the frontiers of the empire,
Adrian, who visited this island, built a rampart
between the river Tyne and the frith of Solway;
Lollius Urbicus, under Antoninus Pius, erected

¹³ Tacit. Agr. ¹⁴ Ibid.

one in the place where Agricola had formerly established his garrisons: Severus, who made an expedition into Britain, and carried his arms to the most northern extremity of it, added new fortifications to the wall of Adrian; and during the reigns of all the Roman emperors, such a profound tranquillity prevailed in Britain, that little mention is made of the affairs of that island by any historian. The only incidents, which occur, are some seditions or rebellions of the Roman legions quartered there, and some usurpations of the Imperial dignity by the Roman governors. The natives, disarmed, dispirited, and submissive, had lost all desire and even idea of their former liberty and independence.

BUT the period was now come, when that enormous fabric of the Roman empire, which had diffused slavery and oppression, together with peace and civility, over so considerable a part of the globe, was approaching towards its final dissolution. Italy, and the center of the empire, removed, during so many ages, from all concern in the wars, had entirely lost the military spirit, and were peopled by an enervated race, equally disposed to submit to a foreign yoke, or to the tyranny of their own rulers. The emperors found themselves obliged to recruit their legions from the frontier provinces, where the genius of war, though languishing, was not totally extinct; and these mercenary forces, careless of laws and civil institutions, established a military government, no less dangerous to the sovereign than to the

C H A P. I. people. The farther progress of the same disorders introduced the bordering barbarians into the service of the Romans; and those fierce nations, having now added discipline and skill to their native bravery, could no longer be restrained by the impotent policy of the emperors, who were accustomed to employ one in the destruction of the others. Sensible of their own force, and allured by the prospect of so rich a prize, the northern barbarians, in the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, assailed at once all the frontiers of the Roman empire; and having first satiated their avidity by plunder, began to think of fixing a settlement in the wasted provinces. The more distant barbarians, who occupied the deserted habitations of the former, advanced in their acquisitions, and pressed with their incumbent weight the Roman state, already unequal to the load which it sustained. Instead of arming the people in their own defence, the emperors recalled all the distant legions, in whom alone they could repose confidence; and collected the whole military force for the defence of the capital and center of the empire. The necessity of self-preservation had superseded the ambition of power; and the ancient point of honour, never to contract the limits of the empire, could no longer be attended to in this desperate extremity.

BRITAIN by its situation was removed from the fury of these barbarous incursions; and being also a remote province, not much valued by the Romans, the legions, which defended it, were

carried over to the protection of Italy and Gaul. C H A P.
But that province, though secured by the sea I.
against the inroads of the greater tribes of barbarians, found enemies on its frontiers, who took advantage of its present defenceless situation. The Picts and Scots, who dwelt in the northern parts, beyond the wall of Antoninus, made incursions upon their peaceable and effeminate neighbours; and besides the temporary depredations which they committed, these combined nations threatened the whole province with subjection, or, what the inhabitants more dreaded, with plunder and devastation. The Picts seem to have been a tribe of the native British race, who, having been chased into the northern parts by the conquests of Agricola, had there intermingled with the ancient inhabitants: The Scots were derived from the same Celtic origin, had first been established in Ireland, had migrated to the north-west coasts of this island, and had long been accustomed, as well from their old as their new seats, to infest the Roman province by piracy and rapine *. These tribes, finding their more opulent neighbours exposed to invasion, soon broke over the Roman wall, no longer defended by the Roman arms; and though a contemptible enemy in themselves, met with no resistance from the unwarlike inhabitants. The Britons, accustomed to have recourse to the emperors for defence as well as government, made supplications to Rome; and one legion was sent

* See Note [A] at the end of the Volume.

C H A P. I. over for their protection. This force was an over-match for the barbarians, repelled their invasion, routed them in every engagement, and having chased them into their ancient limits, returned in triumph to the defence of the southern provinces of the empire ¹⁵. Their retreat brought on a new invasion of the enemy. The Britons made again an application to Rome, and again obtained the assistance of a legion, which proved effectual for their relief: But the Romans, reduced to extremities at home, and fatigued with those distant expeditions, informed the Britons that they must no longer look to them for succour, exhorted them to arm in their own defence, and urged, that, as they were now their own masters, it became them to protect by their valour that independence, which their ancient lords had conferred upon them ¹⁶. That they might leave the island with the better grace, the Romans assisted them in erecting anew the wall of Severus, which was built entirely of stone, and which the Britons had not at that time artificers skilful enough to repair ¹⁷. And having done this last good office to the inhabitants, they bid a final adieu to Britain, about the year 448; after being masters of the more considerable part of it during the course of near four centuries.

¹⁵ Gildas, Bede, lib. 1. cap. 12. Paull. Diacon.

¹⁶ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 12. ¹⁷ Ibid.

The BRITONS.

THE abject Britons regarded this present of liberty as fatal to them; and were in no condition to put in practice the prudent counsel given them by the Romans, to arm in their own defence. Unaccustomed both to the perils of war, and to the cares of civil government, they found themselves incapable of forming or executing any measures for resisting the incursions of the barbarians. Gratian also and Constantine, two Romans who had a little before assumed the purple in Britain, had carried over to the continent the flower of the British youth; and having perished in their unsuccessful attempts on the imperial throne, had despoiled the island of those, who, in this desperate extremity, were best able to defend it. The Picts and Scots, finding that the Romans had finally relinquished Britain, now regarded the whole as their prey, and attacked the northern wall with redoubled forces. The Britons, already subdued by their own fears, found the ramparts but a weak defence for them; and deserting their station, left the country entirely open to the inroads of the barbarous enemy. The invaders carried devastation and ruin along with them; and exerted to the utmost their native ferocity, which was not mitigated by the helpless condition and submissive behaviour of the inhabitants¹⁸. The unhappy Britons had

¹⁸ Gildas, Bede, lib. 1. Ann. Beverl. p. 45.

CHAPTER. a third time recourse to Rome, which had
 I. declared its resolution for ever to abandon them. Ætius, the patrician, sustained, at that time, by his valour and magnanimity, the tottering ruins of the empire, and revived for a moment among the degenerate Romans the spirit, as well as discipline of their ancestors. The British ambassadors carried to him the letter of their countrymen, which was inscribed, *The Groans of the Britons*. The tenor of the epistle was suitable to its superscription. *The barbarians, say they, on the one hand, chase us into the sea; the sea, on the other, throws us back upon the barbarians; and we have only the hard choice left us, of perishing by the sword or by the waves*¹⁹. But Ætius, pressed by the arms of Attila, the most terrible enemy that ever assailed the empire, had no leisure to attend to the complaints of allies, whom generosity alone could induce him to assist²⁰. The Britons, thus rejected, were reduced to despair, deserted their habitations, abandoned tillage, and flying for protection to the forests and mountains, suffered equally from hunger and from the enemy. The barbarians themselves began to feel the pressures of famine in a country which they had ravaged; and being harassed by the dispersed Britons, who had not dared to resist them in a body, they retreated with their spoils into their own country²¹.

¹⁹ Gildas, Bede, lib. 1. cap. 13. Malmesbury, lib. 1. cap. 1. Ann. Beverl. p. 45.

²⁰ Chron. Sax. p. 11. Edit. 1692.

²¹ Ann. Beverl. p. 45.

THE Britons, taking advantage of this interval, returned to their usual occupations; and the favourable seasons, which succeeded, seconding their industry, made them soon forget their past miseries, and restored to them great plenty of all the necessaries of life. No more can be imagined to have been possessed by a people so rude, who had not, without the assistance of the Romans, art of masonry sufficient to raise a stone rampart for their own defence: Yet the Monkish historians²², who treat of those events, complain of the luxury of the Britons during this period, and ascribe to that vice, not to their cowardice or improvident counsels, all their subsequent calamities.

THE Britons, entirely occupied in the enjoyment of the present interval of peace, made no provision for resisting the enemy, who, invited by their former timid behaviour, soon threatened them with a new invasion. We are not exactly informed what species of civil government the Romans on their departure had left among the Britons; but it appears probable, that the great men in the different districts assumed a kind of regal, though precarious authority; and lived in a great measure independant of each other²³. To this disunion of counsels were also added the disputes of theology; and the disciples of Pelagius, who was himself a native of Britain, having

²² Gildas, Bede, lib. i. cap. 14.

²³ Gildas, Usher, Ant. Brit. p. 248, 347.

C H A P. increased to a great multitude, gave alarm to the clergy, who seem to have been more intent on suppressing them, than on opposing the public enemy ²⁴. Labouring under these domestic evils, and menaced with a foreign invasion, the Britons attended only to the suggestions of their present fears; and following the counsels of Vortigern, prince of Dumnonium, who, though stained with every vice, possessed the chief authority among them ²⁵, they sent into Germany a deputation to invite over the Saxons for their protection and assistance.

The SAXONS.

OF all the barbarous nations, known either in ancient or modern times, the Germans seem to have been the most distinguished both by their manners and political institutions, and to have carried to the highest pitch the virtues of valour and love of liberty; the only virtues which can have place among an uncivilized people, where justice and humanity are commonly neglected. Kingly government, even when established among the Germans, (for it was not universal) possessed a very limited authority; and though the sovereign was usually chosen from among the royal family, he was directed in every measure by the common consent of the nation, over whom he presided.

²⁴ Gildas, Bede, lib. i. cap. 17. Constant. in vita Germ.

²⁵ Gildas, Gul. Malm. p. 8.

When any important affairs were transacted, all the warriors met in arms; the men of greatest authority employed persuasion to engage their consent; the people expressed their approbation by rattling their armour, or their dissent by murmurs; there was no necessity for a nice scrutiny of votes among a multitude, who were usually carried with a strong current to one side or the other; and the measure, thus suddenly chosen by general agreement, was executed with alacrity, and prosecuted with vigour. Even in war, the princes governed more by example than by authority: But in peace, the civil union was in a great measure dissolved, and the inferior leaders administered justice, after an independent manner, each in his particular district. These were elected by the votes of the people in their great councils; and though regard was paid to nobility in the choice, their personal qualities, chiefly their valour, procured them, from the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, that honourable but dangerous distinction. The warriors of each tribe attached themselves to their leader, with the most devoted affection and most unshaken constancy. They attended him as his ornament in peace, as his defence in war, as his council in the administration of justice. Their constant emulation in military renown dissolved not that inviolable friendship which they professed to their chieftain and to each other. To die for the honour of their band was their chief ambition: To survive its disgrace, or the death of their leader, was infamous. They

C H A P. even carried into the field their women and
 I. children, who adopted all the martial sentiments
 of the men: And being thus impelled by every
 human motive, they were invincible; where they
 were not opposed, either by the similar manners
 and institutions of the neighbouring Germans, or
 by the superior discipline, arms, and numbers of
 the Romans ²⁶.

THE leaders and their military companions were
 maintained by the labour of their slaves, or by
 that of the weaker and less warlike part of the
 community, whom they defended. The contri-
 butions, which they levied, went not beyond a
 bare subsistence; and the honours, acquired by a
 superior rank, were the only reward of their
 superior dangers and fatigues. All the refined
 arts of life were unknown among the Germans:
 Tillage itself was almost wholly neglected: They
 even seem to have been anxious to prevent any
 improvements of that nature; and the leaders, by
 annually distributing anew all the land among the
 inhabitants of each village, kept them from
 attaching themselves to particular possessions, or
 making such progress in agriculture as might divert
 their attention from military expeditions, the chief
 occupation of the community ²⁷.

THE Saxons had been for some time regarded
 as one of the most warlike tribes of this fierce
 people, and had become the terror of the neigh-

²⁶ Cæsar, lib. 6. Tacit, de Mor. Germ.

²⁷ Cæsar, lib. 6. Tacit. *ibid*.

bouring nations ²⁸. They had diffused themselves from the northern parts of Germany and the Cimbrian Chersonesus, and had taken possession of all the sea coast from the mouth of the Rhine to Jutland; whence they had long invested by their piracies all the eastern and southern parts of Britain, and the northern of Gaul ²⁹. In order to oppose their inroads, the Romans had established an officer, whom they called *Count of the Saxon shore*; and as the naval arts can flourish among a civilized people alone, they seem to have been more successful in repelling the Saxons than any of the other barbarians, by whom they were invaded. The dissolution of the Roman power invited them to renew their inroads; and it was an acceptable circumstance, that the deputies of the Britons appeared among them, and prompted them to undertake an enterprize, to which they were of themselves sufficiently inclined ³⁰.

HENGIST and Horfa, two brothers, possessed great credit among the Saxons, and were much celebrated both for their valour and nobility. They were reputed, as most of the Saxon princes, to be sprung from Woden, who was worshipped as a god among those nations, and they are said to be his great grandsons ³¹; a circumstance which added much to their authority. We shall not

²⁸ Amm. Marcell. lib. 28. Orosius.

²⁹ Amm. Marcell. lib. 27. cap. 7. lib. 28. cap. 7.

³⁰ Will. Malm. p. 8.

³¹ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 15. Saxon Chron. p. 13. Nennius, cap. 28.

CHAP. attempt to trace any higher the origin of those
 I. princes and nations. It is evident what fruitless labour it must be to search, in those barbarous and illiterate ages, for the annals of a people, when their first leaders, known in any true history, were believed by them to be the fourth in descent from a fabulous deity, or from a man, exalted by ignorance into that character. The dark industry of antiquaries, led by imaginary analogies of names, or by uncertain traditions, would in vain attempt to pierce into that deep obscurity, which covers the remote history of those nations.

THESE two brothers, observing the other provinces of Germany to be occupied by a warlike and necessitous people, and the rich provinces of Gaul already conquered or over-run by other German tribes, found it easy to persuade their countrymen to embrace the sole enterprize, which promised a favourable opportunity of displaying their valour and gratifying their avidity. They embarked their troops in three vessels, and about the year 449 or 450³², carried over 1600 men, who landed in the isle of Thanet, and immediately marched to the defence of the Britons against the northern invaders. The Scots and Picts were unable to resist the valour of these auxiliaries; and the Britons, applauding their own wisdom in calling over the Saxons, hoped thenceforth to enjoy peace and security under the powerful protection of that warlike people.

³² Saxon Chronicle, p. 12. Gul. Malm. p. 11. Huntington, lib. 2. p. 309. Ethelwerd. Brompton, pag. 728.

BUT Hengist and Horfa, perceiving, from their easy victory over the Scots and Picts, with what facility they might subdue the Britons themselves, who had not been able to resist those feeble invaders, were determined to conquer and fight for their own grandeur, not for the defence of their degenerate allies. They sent intelligence to Saxony of the fertility and riches of Britain; and represented as certain the subjection of a people, so long disused to arms, who, being now cut off from the Roman empire, of which they had been a province during so many ages, had not yet acquired any union among themselves, and were destitute of all affection to their new liberties, and of all national attachments and regards³³. The vices and pusillanimity of Vortigern, the British leader, were a new ground of hope; and the Saxons in Germany, following such agreeable prospects, soon reinforced Hengist and Horfa with 5000 men, who came over in seventeen vessels. The Britons now began to entertain apprehensions of their allies, whose numbers they found continually augmenting; but thought of no remedy, except a passive submission and connivance. This weak expedient soon failed them. The Saxons sought a quarrel by complaining, that their subsidies were ill paid, and their provisions withdrawn³⁴: And immediately taking off the mask, they formed an alliance with the Picts and

³³ Chron. Sax. p. 12. Ann. Beverl. p. 49.

³⁴ Bede, lib. I. cap. 15. Nennius, cap. 35. Gildas, §. 23.

C H A P. Scots, and proceeded to open hostility against
I. the Britons.

THE Britons, impelled by these violent extremities, and roused to indignation against their treacherous auxiliaries, were necessitated to take arms; and having deposed Vortigern, who had become odious from his vices, and from the bad event of his rash counsels, they put themselves under the command of his son, Vortimer. They fought many battles with their enemies; and though the victories in these actions be disputed between the British and Saxon annalists, the progress still made by the Saxons prove that the advantage was commonly on their side. In one battle, however, fought at Eglesford, now Ailsford, Horfa, the Saxon general, was slain; and left the sole command over his countrymen in the hands of Hengist. This active general, continually reinforced by fresh numbers from Germany, carried devastation into the most remote corners of Britain; and being chiefly anxious to spread the terror of his arms, he spared neither age, nor sex, nor condition, wherever he marched with his victorious forces. The private and public edifices of the Britons were reduced to ashes: The priests were slaughtered on the altars by those idolatrous ravagers: The bishops and nobility shared the fate of the vulgar: The people, flying to the mountains and deserts, were intercepted and butchered in heaps: Some were glad to accept of life and servitude under their victors: Others, deserting their native country, took shelter in the

province of Armorica; where, being charitably received by a people of the same language and manners, they settled in great numbers, and gave the country the name of Brittany ³⁵. C H A P. I.

THE British writers assign one cause, which facilitated the entrance of the Saxons into this island; the love, with which Vortigern was at first seized for Rovená, the daughter of Hengist, and which that artful warrior made use of to blind the eyes of the imprudent monarch ³⁶. The same historians add, that Vortimer died; and that Vortigern, being restored to the throne, accepted of a banquet from Hengist, at Stonehenge; where 300 of his nobility were treacherously slaughtered, and himself detained captive ³⁷. But these stories seem to have been invented by the Welsh authors, in order to palliate the weak resistance made at first by their countrymen, and to account for the rapid progress and licentious devastations of the Saxons ³⁸.

AFTER the death of Vortimer, Ambrosius, a Briton, though of Roman descent, was invested with the command over his countrymen, and endeavoured, not without success, to unite them in their resistance against the Saxons. Those contests increased the animosity between the two nations, and roused the military spirit of the

³⁵ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 15. Usher, p. 226. Gildas, §. 24.

³⁶ Nennius. Galfr. lib. 6. cap. 12.

³⁷ Nennius, cap. 47. Galfr.

³⁸ Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. p. 324. 325.

C H A P. I. ancient inhabitants, which had before been sunk into a fatal lethargy. Hengist, however, notwithstanding their opposition, still maintained his ground in Britain; and in order to divide the forces and attention of the natives, he called over a new tribe of Saxons, under the command of his brother Octa, and of Ebissa, the son of Octa; and he settled them in Northumberland. He himself remained in the southern parts of the island, and laid the foundation of the kingdom of Kent, comprehending the county of that name, Middlesex, Essex, and part of Surrey. He fixed his royal seat at Canterbury; where he governed about forty years, and he died in or near the year 488; leaving his new-acquired dominions to his posterity.

THE success of Hengist excited the avidity of the other northern Germans; and at different times, and under different leaders, they flocked over in multitudes to the invasion of this island. These conquerors were chiefly composed of three tribes, the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes³⁹, who all passed under the common appellation, sometimes of Saxons, sometimes of Angles; and speaking the same language, and being governed by the same institutions, they were naturally led, from

³⁹ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 15. Ethelwerd, p. 833. edit. Camdeni. Chron. Sax. pag. 12. Ann. Beverl. p. 78. The inhabitants of Kent and the Isle of Wight were Jutes. Essex, Middlesex, Surrey, Suffex, and all the southern counties to Cornwall, were peopled by Saxons: Mercia and other parts of the kingdom were inhabited by Angles.

these causes, as well as from their common interest, C H A P.
to unite themselves against the ancient inhabitants. I.

The resistance however, though unequal, was still maintained by the Britons; but became every day more feeble: And their calamities admitted of few intervals, till they were driven into Cornwall and Wales, and received protection from the remote situation or inaccessible mountains of those countries.

THE first Saxon state, after that of Kent, which was established in Britain, was the kingdom of South-Saxony. In the year 477⁴⁰, Ælla, a Saxon chief, brought over an army from Germany; and landing on the southern coast, proceeded to take possession of the neighbouring territory. The Britons, now armed, did not tamely abandon their possessions; nor were they expelled, till defeated in many battles by their warlike invaders. The most memorable action, mentioned by historians, is that of Mearcrides-Burn⁴¹; where, though the Saxons seem to have obtained the victory, they suffered so considerable a loss, as somewhat retarded the progress of their conquests. But Ælla, reinforced by fresh numbers of his countrymen, again took the field against the Britons; and laid siege to Andred-Ceaster, which was defended by the garrison and inhabitants with desperate valour⁴². The Saxons, enraged by this

⁴⁰ Chron. Sax. p. 14. Ann. Beverl. p. 81.

⁴¹ Saxon Chron. A. D. 485. Flor. Wigorn.

⁴² Hen. Huntin. lib. 2.

C H A P.

I.

resistance, and by the fatigues and dangers which they had sustained, redoubled their efforts against the place, and when masters of it, put all their enemies to the sword without distinction. This decisive advantage secured the conquests of Ælla, who assumed the name of King, and extended his dominion over Suffex and a great part of Surrey. He was stopped in his progress to the east by the kingdom of Kent: In that to the west by another tribe of Saxons, who had taken possession of that territory.

THESE Saxons, from the situation of the country, in which they settled, were called the West-Saxons, and landed in the year 495, under the command of Cerdic, and of his son Kenric⁴³. The Britons were, by past experience, so much on their guard, and so well prepared to receive the enemy, that they gave battle to Cerdic the very day of his landing; and though vanquished, still defended, for some time, their liberties against the invaders. None of the other tribes of Saxons met with such vigorous resistance, or exerted such valour and perseverance in pushing their conquests. Cerdic was even obliged to call for the assistance of his countrymen from the kingdoms of Kent and Suffex, as well as from Germany, and he was thence joined by a fresh army under the command of Porte, and of his sons Bleda and Megla⁴⁴: Strengthened by these

⁴³ Will. Malm. lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 12. Chron. Sax. p. 15.

⁴⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 17.

succours, he fought, in the year 508, a desperate battle with the Britons, commanded by Nazan-Leod, their leader, who was victorious in the beginning of the action, and routed the wing in which Cerdic himself commanded. But Kenric, who had prevailed in the other wing, brought timely assistance to his father, and restored the battle, which ended in a complete victory gained by the Saxons⁴⁵. Nazan-Leod perished, with 5000 of his army: But left the Britons more weakened than discouraged by his death. The war still continued, though the success was commonly on the side of the Saxons, whose short swords and close manner of fighting gave them great advantage over the missile weapons of the Britons. Cerdic was not wanting to his good fortune; and in order to extend his conquests, he laid siege to Mount Badon or Banefdown near Bath, whither the most obstinate of the discomfited Britons had retired. The southern Britons in this extremity applied for assistance to Arthur, Prince of the Silures, whose heroic valour now sustained the declining fate of his country⁴⁶. This is that Arthur so much celebrated by the songs of Talieffin, and the other British bards, and whose military achievements have been blended with so many fables as even to give occasion for entertaining a doubt of his real

⁴⁵ H. Hunting. lib. 2. Ethelwerd, lib. 1. Chron. Sax. p. 17.

⁴⁶ Hunting. lib. 2.

C H A P. I. existence. But poets, though they disfigure the most certain history by their fictions, and use strange liberties with truth where they are the sole historians, as among the Britons, have commonly some foundation for their wildest exaggerations. Certain it is, that the siege of Badon was raised by the Britons in the year 520; and the Saxons were there discomfited in a great battle⁴⁷. This misfortune stopped the progress of Cerdic; but was not sufficient to wrest from him the conquests, which he had already made. He and his son, Kenric, who succeeded him, established the kingdom of the West-Saxons or of Wessex, over the counties of Hants, Dorset, Wilts, Berks, and the Isle of Wight, and left their new-acquired dominions to their posterity. Cerdic died in 534, Kenric in 560.

WHILE the Saxons made this progress in the south, their countrymen were not less active in other quarters. In the year 527, a great tribe of adventurers, under several leaders, landed on the east-coast of Britain; and after fighting many battles, of which history has preserved no particular account, they established three new kingdoms in this island. Uffa assumed the title of king of the East-Angles in 575; Crida that of Mercia in 585⁴⁸; and Erkenwin that of East-Saxony or Essex nearly about the same time; but the year is uncertain. This latter kingdom was dismembered from that of Kent, and comprehended

⁴⁷ Gildas, Saxon Chron. H. Hunting. lib. 2.

⁴⁸ Math. West. Huntingdon, lib. 2.

Essex, Middlesex, and part of Herfordshire. That of the East-Angles, the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk: Mercia was extended over all the middle counties, from the banks of the Severn, to the frontiers of these two kingdoms.

C H A P.
I.

THE Saxons, soon after the landing of Hengist, had been planted in Northumberland; but as they met with an obstinate resistance, and made but small progress in subduing the inhabitants, their affairs were in so unsettled a condition, that none of their princes for a long time assumed the appellation of king. At last in 547⁴⁹, Ida, a Saxon prince of great valour⁵⁰, who claimed a descent, as did all the other princes of that nation, from Woden, brought over a reinforcement from Germany, and enabled the Northumbrians to carry on their conquests over the Britons. He entirely subdued the county now called Northumberland, the bishopric of Durham, as well as some of the south-east counties of Scotland; and he assumed the crown under the title of king of Bernicia. Nearly about the same time, Ælla, another Saxon prince, having conquered Lancashire, and the greatest part of Yorkshire, received the appellation of king of Deiri⁵¹. These two kingdoms were united in the person of Ethelfrid, grandson of Ida, who married Acca, the daughter

⁴⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 19.

⁵⁰ Will. Malmf. p. 19.

⁵¹ Ann. Beverl. p. 78.

C H A P. I. of Ælla; and expelling her brother, Edwin, established one of the most powerful of the Saxon kingdoms, under the title of Northumberland. How far his dominions extended into the country now called Scotland is uncertain; but it cannot be doubted, that all the lowlands, especially the east-coast of that country, were peopled in a great measure from Germany; though the expeditions, made by the several Saxon adventurers, have escaped the records of history. The language, spoken in those countries, which is purely Saxon, is a stronger proof of this event, than can be opposed by the imperfect, or rather fabulous annals, which are obtruded on us by the Scottish historians.

The HEPTARCHY.

THUS was established, after a violent contest of near a hundred and fifty years, the Heptarchy, or seven Saxon kingdoms, in Britain; and the whole southern part of the Island, except Wales and Cornwall, had totally changed its inhabitants, language, customs, and political institutions. The Britons, under the Roman dominion, had made such advances towards arts and civil manners, that they had built twenty-eight considerable cities within their province, besides a great number of villages and country-seats⁵²: But the fierce conquerors, by whom they were now

⁵² Gildas. Bede, lib. i.

subdued, threw every thing back into ancient barbarity; and those few natives, who were not either massacred or expelled their habitations, were reduced to the most abject slavery. None of the other northern conquerors, the Franks, Goths, Vandals, or Burgundians, though they over-ran the southern provinces of the empire like a mighty torrent, made such devastations in the conquered territories, or were inflamed into so violent an animosity against the ancient inhabitants. As the Saxons came over at intervals in separate bodies, the Britons, however at first unwarlike, were tempted to make resistance; and hostilities, being thereby prolonged, proved more destructive to both parties, especially to the vanquished. The first invaders from Germany, instead of excluding other adventurers, who must share with them the spoils and property of the ancient inhabitants, were obliged to solicit fresh supplies from their own country; and a total extermination of the Britons became the sole expedient for providing a settlement and subsistence to the new planters. Hence there have been found in history few conquests more ruinous than that of the Saxons; and few revolutions more violent than that which they introduced.

So long as the contest was maintained with the natives, the several Saxon princes preserved an union of counsels and interests; but after the Britons were shut up in the barren countries of Cornwall and Wales, and gave no farther disturbance to the conquerors, the band of alliance

G H A P. was in a great measure dissolved among the
 I. princes of the Heptarchy. Though one prince seems still to have been allowed, or to have assumed, an ascendant over the whole, his authority, if it ought ever to be deemed regular or legal, was extremely limited; and each state acted as if it had been independent, and wholly separate from the rest. Wars, therefore, and revolutions and dissensions were unavoidable among a turbulent and military people; and these events, however intricate or confused, ought now to become the objects of our attention. But, added to the difficulty of carrying on at once the history of seven independent kingdoms, there is great discouragement to a writer, arising from the uncertainty, at least barrenness, of the accounts transmitted to us. The Monks, who were the only annalists during those ages, lived remote from public affairs; considered the civil transactions as entirely subordinate to the ecclesiastical, and besides partaking of the ignorance and barbarity, which were then universal, were strongly infected with credulity, with the love of wonder, and with a propensity to imposture; vices almost inseparable from their profession, and manner of life. The history of that period abounds in names, but is extremely barren of events: or the events are related so much without circumstances and causes, that the most profound or most eloquent writer must despair of rendering them either instructive or entertaining to the reader. Even the great learning and vigorous imagination of

Milton sunk under the weight; and this author scruples not to declare, that the skirmishes of kites or crows as much merited a particular narrative, as the confused transactions and battles of the Saxon Heptarchy⁵³. In order, however, to connect the events in some tolerable measure, we shall give a succinct account of the successions of kings, and of the more remarkable revolutions in each particular kingdom; beginning with that of Kent, which was the first established.

The Kingdom of KENT.

ESCUS succeeded his father, Hengist, in the kingdom of Kent; but seems not to have possessed the military genius of that conqueror, who first made way for the entrance of the Saxon arms into Britain. All the Saxons, who fought either the fame of valour, or new establishments by arms, flocked to the standard of Ælla, king of Suffex, who was carrying on successful war against the Britons, and laying the foundations of a new kingdom. Escus was content to possess in tranquillity the kingdom of Kent, which he left in 512 to his son Octa, in whose time the East-Saxons established their monarchy; and dismembered the provinces of Essex and Middlesex from that of Kent. His death, after a reign of twenty-two years, made room for his son Hermenric in 534, who performed nothing memorable during

⁵³ Milton in Kennet, p. 50.

C H A P. I. a reign of thirty-two years ; except associating with him his son, Ethelbert, in the government, that he might secure the succession in his family, and prevent such revolutions as are incident to a turbulent and barbarous monarchy.

ETHELBERT revived the reputation of his family, which had languished for some generations. The inactivity of his predecessors, and the situation of his country, secured from all hostility with the Britons, seem to have much enfeebled the warlike genius of the Kentish Saxons : and Ethelbert, in his first attempt to aggrandize his country, and distinguish his own name, was unsuccessful⁵⁴. He was twice defeated in battle by Ceaulin, king of Wessex ; and obliged to yield the superiority in the Heptarchy to that ambitious monarch, who preserved no moderation in his victory, and by reducing the kingdom of Sussex to subjection, excited jealousy in all the other princes. An association was formed against him ; and Ethelbert, entrusted with the command of the allies, gave him battle, and obtained a decisive victory⁵⁵. Ceaulin died soon after ; and Ethelbert succeeded as well to his ascendant among the Saxon states, as to his other ambitious projects. He reduced all the princes, except the king of Northumberland, to a strict dependence upon him ; and even established himself by force on the throne of Mercia, the

⁵⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 21.

⁵⁵ H. Hunting. lib. 2.

most extensive of the Saxon kingdoms. Apprehensive, however, of a dangerous league against him, like that by which he himself had been enabled to overthrow Ceaulin, he had the prudence to resign the throne of Mercia to Webba, the rightful heir, the son of Crida, who had first founded that monarchy. But governed still by ambition more than by justice, he gave Webba possession of the crown on such conditions, as rendered him little better than a tributary prince under his artful benefactor.

BUT the most memorable event, which distinguished the reign of this great prince, was the introduction of the Christian religion among the English Saxons. The superstition of the Germans, particularly that of the Saxons, was of the grossest and most barbarous kind; and being founded on certain traditional tales, received from their ancestors, not reduced to any system, not supported by political institutions, like that of the Druids, it seems to have made little impression on its votaries, and to have easily resigned its place to the new doctrine, promulgated to them. Woden, whom they deemed the ancestor of all their princes, was regarded as the god of war, and, by a natural consequence, became their supreme deity, and the chief object of their religious worship. They believed, that, if they obtained the favour of this divinity by their valour, (for they made less account of the other virtues) they should be admitted after their death into his hall; and reposing on couches,

C H A P. should satiate themselves with ale from the skulls
 L of their enemies, whom they had slain in battle. Incited by this idea of paradise, which gratified at once the passion of revenge and that of intemperance, the ruling inclinations of barbarians, they despised the dangers of war, and increased their native ferocity against the vanquished by their religious prejudices. We know little of the other theological tenets of the Saxons: We only learn that they were polytheists; that they worshipped the sun and moon; that they adored the god of thunder, under the name of Thor; that they had images in their temples; that they practised sacrifices; believed firmly in spells and enchantments; and admitted in general a system of doctrines, which they held as sacred, but which, like all other superstitions, must carry the air of the wildest extravagance, if propounded to those who are not familiarized to it from their earliest infancy.

THE constant hostilities, which the Saxons maintained against the Britons, would naturally indispose them for receiving the Christian faith, when preached to them by such inveterate enemies; and perhaps the Britons, as is objected to them by Gildas and Bede, were not overfond of communicating to their cruel invaders the doctrine of eternal life and salvation. But as a civilized people, however subdued by arms, still maintain a sensible superiority over barbarous and ignorant nations, all the other northern conquerors of Europe had been already induced to

embrace the Christian faith, which they found established in the empire; and it was impossible but the Saxons, informed of this event, must have regarded with some degree of veneration a doctrine, which had acquired the ascendant over all their brethren. However limited in their views, they could not but have perceived a degree of cultivation in the southern countries beyond what they themselves possessed; and it was natural for them to yield to that superior knowledge, as well as zeal, by which the inhabitants of the Christian kingdoms were even at that time distinguished.

BUT these causes might long have failed of producing any considerable effect, had not a favourable incident prepared the means for introducing Christianity into Kent. Ethelbert, in his father's lifetime, had married Bertha, the only daughter of Caribert, king of Paris⁵⁶, one of the descendants of Clovis, the conqueror of Gaul; but before he was admitted to this alliance, he was obliged to stipulate, that the princess should enjoy the free exercise of her religion; a concession not difficult to be obtained from the idolatrous Saxons⁵⁷. Bertha brought over a French bishop to the court of Canterbury; and being zealous for the propagation of her religion, she had been very assiduous in her devotional exercises, had supported the credit of her faith by an irreproachable conduct, and had employed every

⁵⁶ Greg. of Tours, lib. 9. cap. 26. H. Hunting. lib. 2.

⁵⁷ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 25. Brompton, p. 729.

C H A P. art of insinuation and address to reconcile her
I. husband to her religious principles. Her popularity in the court, and her influence over Ethelbert, had so well paved the way for the reception of the Christian doctrine, that Gregory, surnamed the Great, then Roman pontiff, began to entertain hopes of effecting a project which he himself, before he mounted the papal throne, had once embraced, of converting the British Saxons.

It happened, that this prelate, being at that time in a private station, had observed in the market-place of Rome some Saxon youth exposed to sale, whom the Roman merchants, in their trading voyages to Britain, had bought of their mercenary parents. Struck with the beauty of their fair complexions and blooming countenances, Gregory asked to what country they belonged; and being told they were *Angles*, he replied, that they ought more properly to be denominated *angels*: It was a pity that the Prince of Darkness should enjoy so fair a prey, and that so beautiful a frontispiece should cover a mind destitute of internal grace and righteousness. Enquiring farther concerning the name of their province, he was informed, that it was *Deïri*, a district of Northumberland: *Deïri!* replied he, *that is good! They are called to the mercy of God from his anger, De irâ. But what is the name of the king of that province?* He was told it was *Ælla* or *Alla*: *Alleluiah*, cried he: *We must endeavour, that the praises of God be sung in their country.*

Moved by these allusions, which appeared to C H A P. I.
him so happy, he determined to undertake, himself, a mission into Britain; and having obtained the Pope's approbation, he prepared for that perilous journey: But his popularity at home was so great, that the Romans, unwilling to expose him to such dangers, opposed his design; and he was obliged for the present to lay aside all farther thoughts of executing that pious purpose⁸.

THE controversy between the Pagans and the Christians was not entirely cooled in that age; and no pontiff before Gregory had ever carried to greater excess an intemperate zeal against the former religion. He had waged war with all the precious monuments of the ancients, and even with their writings; which, as appears from the strain of his own wit, as well as from the style of his compositions, he had not taste or genius sufficient to comprehend. Ambitious to distinguish his pontificate by the conversion of the British Saxons, he pitched on Augustine, a Roman monk, and sent him with forty associates to preach the gospel in this island. These missionaries, terrified with the dangers which might attend their proposing a new doctrine to so fierce a people, of whose language they were ignorant, stopped some time in France, and sent back Augustine to lay the hazards and difficulties before the Pope, and crave his permission to desist from the undertaking. But Gregory exhorted them to persevere in their purpose, advised them to chuse

⁸ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 1. Spell. Conc. p. 91.

C H A P. I. some interpreters from among the Franks, who still spoke the same language with the Saxons⁵⁹, and recommended them to the good offices of queen Brunehaut, who had at this time usurped the sovereign power in France. This princess, though stained with every vice of treachery and cruelty, either possessed or pretended great zeal for the cause; and Gregory acknowledged, that to her friendly assistance was, in a great measure, owing the success of that undertaking⁶⁰.

AUGUSTINE, on his arrival in Kent in the year 597⁶¹, found the danger much less than he had apprehended. Ethelbert, already well-disposed towards the Christian faith, assigned him a habitation in the isle of Thanet; and soon after admitted him to a conference. Apprehensive, however, lest spells or enchantments might be employed against him by priests, who brought an unknown worship from a distant country, he had the precaution to receive them in the open air, where, he believed, the force of their magic would be more easily dissipated⁶². Here Augustine, by means of his interpreters, delivered to him the tenets of the Christian faith, and promised him eternal joys above, and a kingdom in heaven without end, if he would be persuaded to receive

⁵⁹ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 23.

⁶⁰ Greg. Epist. lib. 9. epist. 56, Spell. Conc. p. 82.

⁶¹ Higden, Polychron. lib. 5. Chron. Sax. p. 23.

⁶² Bede, lib. 1. cap. 25. H. Hunting. lib. 3. Brompton, p. 729. Parker, Antiq. Brit. Eccl. p. 61.

that salutary doctrine. “⁶³ Your words and
 “ promises,” replied Ethelbert, “ are fair; but
 “ because they are new and uncertain, I cannot
 “ entirely yield to them, and relinquish the prin-
 “ ciples, which I and my ancestors have so long
 “ maintained. You are welcome, however, to
 “ remain here in peace; and as you have under-
 “ taken so long a journey, solely, as it appears, for
 “ what you believe to be for our advantage, I
 “ will supply you with all necessaries, and permit
 “ you to deliver your doctrine to my subjects “.

AUGUSTINE, encouraged by this favourable reception, and seeing now a prospect of success, proceeded with redoubled zeal to preach the gospel to the Kentish Saxons. He attracted their attention by the austerity of his manners, by the severe penances to which he subjected himself, by the abstinence and self-denial which he practised: And having excited their wonder by a course of life, which appeared so contrary to nature, he procured more easily their belief of miracles, which, it was pretended, he wrought for their conversion “⁶⁴. Influenced by these motives, and by the declared favour of the court, numbers of the Kentish men were baptized; and the king himself was persuaded to submit to that rite of Christianity. His example had great influence

⁶³ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 25. Chron. W. Thorn, p. 1759.

⁶⁴ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 25. H. Hunting. lib. 3. Brompton, p. 729.

⁶⁵ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 26.

C H A P. L. with his subjects; but he employed no force to bring them over to the new doctrine. Augustine thought proper, in the commencement of his mission to assume the appearance of the greatest lenity: He told Ethelbert, that the service of Christ must be entirely voluntary, and that no violence ought ever to be used in propagating so salutary a doctrine “.

THE intelligence, received of these spiritual conquests, afforded great joy to the Romans; who now exulted as much in those peaceful trophies, as their ancestors had ever done in their most sanguinary triumphs, and most splendid victories. Gregory wrote a letter to Ethelbert, in which, after informing him that the end of the world was approaching, he exhorted him to display his zeal in the conversion of his subjects, to exert rigour against the worship of idols, and to build up the good work of holiness by every expedient of exhortation, terror, blandishment, or correction “: A doctrine more suitable to that age, and to the usual papal maxims, than the tolerating principles, which Augustine had thought it prudent to inculcate. The pontiff also answered some questions, which the missionary had put concerning the government of the new church of Kent. Besides other queries, which it is not material here to relate, Augustine asked,

“ Ibid. cap. 26. H. Hunting. lib. 3.

“ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 32. Brompton, p. 732. Spell. Conc. p. 86.

Whether cousin-germans might be allowed to marry? C H A P. I.
 Gregory answered, that that liberty had indeed been formerly granted by the Roman law; but that experience had shewn, that no issue could ever come from such marriages; and he therefore prohibited them. Augustine asked, *Whether a woman pregnant might be baptized?* Gregory answered, that he saw no objection. *How soon after the birth the child might receive baptism?* It was answered, Immediately, if necessary. *How soon a husband might have commerce with his wife after her delivery?* Not till she had given suck to her child; a practice to which Gregory exhorts all women. *How soon a man might enter the church, or receive the sacrament, after having had commerce with his wife?* It was replied, that, unless he had approached her without desire, merely for the sake of propagating his species, he was not without sin. But in all cases it was requisite for him, before he entered the church, or communicated, to purge himself by prayer and ablution; and he ought not, even after using these precautions, to participate immediately of the sacred duties ⁶⁸. There are some other questions and replies still more indecent and more ridiculous ⁶⁹. And on the whole, it appears, that

⁶⁸ Bede, lib. i. cap. 27. Spell. Conc. p. 97, 98, 99. etc.

⁶⁹ Augustine asks, *Si mulier menstruâ consuetudine tenetur, an ecclesiam intrare ei licet, aut sacra communionis sacramenta percipere?* Gregory answers, *Sanctæ communionis mysterium in eisdem diebus percipere non debet prohiberi. Si autem ex veneratione magnâ percipere non præsumitur, laudanda est.* Augustine asks, *Si post*

C H A P. Gregory and his missionary, if sympathy of manners have any influence, were better calculated than men of more refined understandings, for making a progress with the ignorant and barbarous Saxons.

THE more to facilitate the reception of Christianity, Gregory enjoined Augustine to remove the idols from the Heathen altars, but not to destroy the altars themselves; because the people, he said, would be allured to frequent the Christian worship, when they found it celebrated in a place, which they were accustomed to revere. And as the Pagans practised sacrifices, and feasted with the priests on their offerings, he also exhorted the missionary to persuade them, on Christian festivals, to kill their cattle in the neighbourhood of the church, and to indulge themselves in those cheerful entertainments, to which they had been habituated⁷⁰. These political compliances shew, that, notwithstanding his ignorance and prejudices, he was not unacquainted with the arts of governing mankind. Augustine was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, was endowed by Gregory with authority over all the British churches, and received the pall, a badge of ecclesiastical honour, from Rome⁷¹. Gregory also advised him not to be too

illusionem, quæ per somnum solet accidere, vel corpus Domini quilibet accipere valeat; vel, si sacerdos sit, sacra mysteria celebrare? Gregory answers this learned question by many learned distinctions.

⁷⁰ Bede, lib. i. cap. 30. Spell. Conc. p. 89. Greg. Epist. lib. 9. epist. 71.

⁷¹ Chron. Sax. p. 23. 24.

much elated with his gift of working miracles ⁷²; and as Augustine, proud of the success of his mission, seemed to think himself entitled to extend his authority over the bishops of Gaul, the Pope informed him, that they lay entirely without the bounds of his jurisdiction ⁷³. G H A P.
I.

THE marriage of Ethelbert with Bertha, and much more his embracing Christianity, begat a connexion of his subjects with the French, Italians, and other nations on the continent, and tended to reclaim them from that gross ignorance and barbarity, in which all the Saxon tribes had been hitherto involved ⁷⁴. Ethelbert also enacted ⁷⁵, with the consent of the states of his kingdom, a body of laws, the first written laws promulgated by any of the northern conquerors; and his reign was in every respect glorious to himself, and beneficial to his people. He governed the kingdom of Kent fifty years; and dying in 616, left the succession to his son, Eadbald. This prince seduced by a passion for his mother-in-law, deserted for some time the Christian faith, which permitted not these incestuous marriages: His whole people immediately returned with him to idolatry. Laurentius, the successor of Augustine, found the Christian worship wholly abandoned, and was

⁷² H. Hunting. lib. 3. Spell. Conc. pag. 83. Bede, lib. 1. Greg. Epist. lib. 9 epist. 60.

⁷³ Bede, lib. 1. cap. 27.

⁷⁴ Will. Malm. p. 10.

⁷⁵ Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 13.

C H A P. I. preparing to return to France, in order to escape the mortification of preaching the gospel without fruit to the infidels. Mellitus and Justus, who had been consecrated bishops of London and Rochester, had already departed the kingdom⁷⁶; when Laurentius, before he should entirely abandon his dignity, made one effort to reclaim the King. He appeared before that prince; and throwing off his vestments, showed his body all torn with bruises and stripes, which he had received. Eadbald, wondering that any man should have dared to treat in that manner a person of his rank, was told by Laurentius, that he had received this chastisement from St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, who had appeared to him in a vision, and severely reproving him for his intention to desert his charge, had inflicted on him these visible marks of his displeasure⁷⁷. Whether Eadbald was struck with the miracle, or influenced by some other motive, he divorced himself from his mother-in-law, and returned to the profession of Christianity⁷⁸: His whole people returned with him. Eadbald reached not the same or authority of his father, and died in 640, after a reign of twenty-five years; leaving two sons, Erminfrid and Ercombert.

ERCOMBERT, though the youngest son, by Emma, a French princess, found means to mount

⁷⁶ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid. cap. 6. Chron. Sax. p. 26. Higden, lib. 5.

⁷⁸ Brompton, p. 739.

the throne. He is celebrated by Bede for two exploits, for establishing the fast of Lent in his kingdom, and for utterly extirpating idolatry; which, notwithstanding the prevalence of Christianity, had hitherto been tolerated by the two preceding monarchs. He reigned twenty-four years; and left the crown to Egbert, his son, who reigned nine years. This prince is renowned for his encouragement of learning; but infamous for putting to death his two cousin-germans, sons of Erminfrid, his uncle. The ecclesiastical writers praise him for his bestowing on his sister Domnona, some lands in the isle of Thanet, where she founded a monastery.

THE bloody precaution of Egbert could not fix the crown on the head of his son, Edric. Lothaire, brother to the deceased prince took possession of the kingdom; and, in order to secure the power in his family, he associated with him Richard, his son, in the administration of the government. Edric, the dispossessed prince, had recourse to Edilwach, king of Sussex, for assistance; and being supported by that prince, fought a battle with his uncle, who was defeated and slain. Richard fled into Germany, and afterwards died in Lucca, a city of Tuscany. William of Malmesbury ascribes Lothaire's bad fortune to two crimes, his concurrence in the murder of his cousins, and his contempt for reliques⁷⁹.

LOTHAIRE reigned eleven years; Edric, his successor, only two. Upon the death of the

⁷⁹ Will. Malm. p. 11.

C H A P. I. latter, which happened in 686, Widred, his brother, obtained possession of the crown. But as the succession had been of late so much disjoined by revolutions and usurpations, faction began to prevail among the nobility; which invited Cedwalla, king of Wessex, with his brother Mollo, to attack the kingdom. These invaders committed great devastations in Kent; but the death of Mollo, who was slain in a skirmish⁸⁰, gave a short breathing-time to that kingdom. Widred restored the affairs of Kent; and after a reign of thirty-two years⁸¹, left the crown to his posterity. Eadbert, Ethelbert, and Alric, his descendants, successively mounted the throne. After the death of the last, which happened in 794, the royal family of Kent was extinguished; and every factious leader who could entertain hopes of ascending the throne, threw the state into confusion.⁸² Egbert, who first succeeded, reigned but two years; Cuthred, brother to the king of Mercia, six years; Baldred, an illegitimate branch of the royal family, eighteen: And after a troublesome and precarious reign, he was, in the year 723, expelled by Egbert, king of Wessex, who dissolved the Saxon heptarchy, and united the several kingdoms under his dominion.

⁸⁰ Higden, lib. 5.

⁸¹ Chron. Sax. p. 52.

⁸² Will. Malmes. lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 11.

The Kingdom of NORTHUMBERLAND.

C H A P.
I.

ADELFRID, king of Bernicia, having married Acca, the daughter of Ælla, king of Deïri, and expelled her infant brother, Edwin, had united all the counties north of Humber into one monarchy, and acquired a great ascendant in the heptarchy. He also spread the terror of the Saxon arms to the neighbouring people; and by his victories over the Scots and Picts, as well as Welsh, extended on all sides the bounds of his dominions. Having laid siege to Chester, the Britons marched out with all their forces to engage him; and they were attended by a body of 1250 monks from the monastery of Bangor, who stood at a small distance from the field of battle, in order to encourage the combatants by their presence and exhortations. Adelfrid enquiring the purpose of this unusual appearance, was told, that these priests had come to pray against him: *Then are they as much our enemies*, said he, *as those who intend to fight against us*⁸³: And he immediately sent a detachment, who fell upon them, and did such execution, that only fifty escaped with their lives⁸⁴. The Britons, astonished at this event, received a total defeat: Chester was obliged to surrender: And Adelfrid, pursuing his victory, made himself master of Bangor, and entirely demolished the monastery; a building so extensive,

⁸³ Brompton, p. 779.⁸⁴ Trivet. apud Spell. Conc. p. 111.

CHAP. 1. that there was a mile's distance from one gate of it to another; and it contained two thousand one hundred monks, who are said to have been there maintained by their own labour⁸⁵.

NOTWITHSTANDING Adelfrid's success in war, he lived in inquietude on account of young Edwin, whom he had unjustly dispossessed of the crown of Deïri. This prince, now grown to man's estate, wandered from place to place, in continual danger from the attempts of Adelfrid; and received at last protection in the court of Redwald, king of the East-Angles; where his engaging and gallant deportment procured him general esteem and affection. Redwald, however, was strongly solicited by the king of Northumberland to kill or deliver up his guest: Rich presents were promised him, if he would comply; and war denounced against him, in case of his refusal. After rejecting several messages of this kind, his generosity began to yield to the motives of interest; and he retained the last ambassador, till he should come to a resolution in a case of such importance. Edwin, informed of his friend's perplexity, was yet determined at all hazards to remain in East-Anglia; and thought, that, if the protection of that court failed him, it were better to die than prolong a life so much exposed to the persecutions of his powerful rival. This confidence in Redwald's honour and friendship, with his other accomplishments, engaged the

⁸⁵ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 2. W. Malines. lib. 1. cap. 3.

Queen on his side; and she effectually represented to her husband the infamy of delivering up to certain destruction their royal guest, who had fled to them for protection against his cruel and jealous enemies⁸⁶. Redwald, embracing more generous resolutions, thought it safest to prevent Adelfrid, before that prince was aware of his intention, and to attack him while he was yet unprepared for defence. He marched suddenly with an army into the kingdom of Northumberland, and fought a battle with Adelfrid; in which that monarch was defeated and killed, after revenging himself by the death of Regner, son of Redwald⁸⁷. His own sons, Eanfrid, Oswald, and Ofwy, yet infants, were carried into Scotland; and Edwin obtained possession of the crown of Northumberland.

EDWIN was the greatest prince of the heptarchy in that age, and distinguished himself, both by his influence over the other kingdoms⁸⁸, and by the strict execution of justice in his own dominions. He reclaimed his subjects from the licentious life, to which they had been accustomed; and it was a common saying, that during his reign a woman or child might openly carry every where a purse of gold, without any danger of violence or robbery. There is a remarkable instance, transmitted to us, of the affection

⁸⁶ W. Malmes. lib 1. cap. 3. H. Hunting. lib. 3. Bede.

⁸⁷ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 12. Brompton, p. 781.

⁸⁸ Chron. Sax. p. 27.

C H A P.

I.

borne him by his servants. Cuichelme, king of Wessex, was his enemy; but finding himself unable to maintain open war against so gallant and powerful a prince, he determined to use treachery against him, and he employed one Eumer for that criminal purpose. The assassin, having obtained admittance, by pretending to deliver a message from Cuichelme, drew his dagger, and rushed upon the King. Lilla, an officer of his army, seeing his master's danger, and having no other means of defence, interposed with his own body between the King and Eumer's dagger, which was pushed with such violence, that, after piercing Lilla, it even wounded Edwin: But before the assassin could renew his blow, he was dispatched by the King's attendants.

THE East-Angles conspired against Redwald, their King; and having put him to death, they offered their crown to Edwin, of whose valour and capacity they had experience, while he resided among them. But Edwin, from a sense of gratitude towards his benefactor, obliged them to submit to Earpwold, the son of Redwald; and that prince preserved his authority, though on a precarious footing, under the protection of the Northumbrian monarch⁹⁹.

EDWIN, after his accession to the crown, married Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, King of Kent. This princess, emulating the glory of her mother Bertha, who had been the instrument

⁹⁹ Gul. Malmes. lib. i. cap. 3.

for converting her husband and his people to Christianity, carried Paullinus, a learned bishop, along with her⁹⁰; and besides stipulating a toleration for the exercise of her own religion, which was readily granted her, she used every reason to persuade the King to embrace it. Edwin, like a prudent prince, hesitated on the proposal; but promised to examine the foundations of that doctrine; and declared, that, if he found them satisfactory, he was willing to be converted⁹¹. Accordingly he held several conferences with Paullinus; canvassed the arguments propounded with the wisest of his counsellors; retired frequently from company, in order to revolve alone that important question; and, after a serious and long enquiry, declared in favour of the Christian religion⁹². The people soon after imitated his example. Besides the authority and influence of the King, they were moved by another striking example. Coifi, the high-priest, being converted after a public conference with Paullinus, led the way in destroying the images, which he had so long worshipped, and was forward in making this atonement for his past idolatry⁹³.

THIS able prince perished with his son, Osfrid, in a great battle which he fought against Penda, king of Mercia, and Cædwalla, king of the

⁹⁰ H. Hunting. lib. 3.

⁹¹ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 9.

⁹² Bede, lib. 2. cap. 9. Malmesb. lib. 1. cap. 3.

⁹³ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 13. Brompton, Higden, lib. 5.

C H A P. Britons ⁹⁴. That event, which happened in the
I. forty-eighth year of Edwin's age and seventeenth
of his reign ⁹⁵, divided the monarchy of Northum-
berland, which that prince had united in his per-
son. Eanfrid, the son of Adelfrid, returned
with his brothers, Oswald and Oswy, from
Scotland, and took possession of Bernicia, his
paternal kingdom: Osric, Edwin's cousin-ger-
man, established himself in Deïri, the inheritance
of his family; but to which the sons of Edwin
had a preferable title. Eanfrid, the eldest sur-
viving son, fled to Penda, by whom he was
treacherously slain. The younger son, Vuscfraea,
with Yffi, the grandson of Edwin, by Osfrid,
sought protection in Kent, and not finding them-
selves in safety there, retired into France to King
Dagobert, where they died ⁹⁶.

OSRIC, King of Deïri, and Eanfrid of Ber-
nicia returned to Paganism; and the whole peo-
ple seem to have returned with them; since Paul-
linus, who was the first archbishop of York, and
who had converted them, thought proper to
retire with Ethelburga, the Queen Dowager,
into Kent. Both these Northumbrian kings pe-
rished soon after, the first in battle against Cæd-
walla, the Briton; the second by the treachery
of that prince. Oswald, the brother of Ean-
frid, of the race of Bernicia, united again the

⁹⁴ Matth. West. p. 114. Chron. Sax. p. 29.

⁹⁵ W. Malmes. lib. 1. cap. 3.

⁹⁶ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 20.

kingdom of Northumberland in the year 634, C H A P. I.
and restored the Christian religion in his dominions. He gained a bloody and well-disputed battle against Cædwalla; the last vigorous effort which the Britons made against the Saxons. Oswald is much celebrated for his sanctity and charity by the Monkish historians; and they pretend, that his reliques wrought miracles, particularly the curing of a sick horse, which had approached the place of his interment⁹⁷.

HE died in battle against Penda, king of Mercia, and was succeeded by his brother, Oswy; who established himself in the government of all the Northumbrian kingdom, by putting to death Oswin, the son of Ofric, the last king of the race of Deiri. His son Egfrid succeeded him; who perishing in battle against the Picts, without leaving any children, because Adelthrid, his wife, refused to violate her vow of chastity, Alfred, his natural brother, acquired possession of the kingdom, which he governed for nineteen years; and he left it to Ofred, his son, a boy of eight years of age. This prince, after a reign of eleven years, was murdered by Kenred his kinsman, who, after enjoying the crown only a year, perished by a like fate. Ofric, and after him Celwulph the son of Kenred, next mounted the throne, which the latter relinquished in the year 738, in favour of Eadbert his cousin-german, who, imitating his predecessor, abdicated the

⁹⁷ Bede, lib. 3. cap. 9.

C H A P. I. crown, and retired into a monastery. Oswolf, son of Eadbert, was slain in a sedition, a year after his accession to the crown; and Mollo, who was not of the royal family, seized the crown. He perished by the treachery of Ailred, a prince of the blood; and Ailred, having succeeded in his design upon the throne, was soon after expelled by his subjects. Ethelred, his successor, the son of Mollo, underwent a like fate. Celwold, the next king, the brother of Ailred, was deposed and slain by the people, and his place was filled by Ofred, his nephew, who, after a short reign of a year, made way for Ethelbert, another son of Mollo, whose death was equally tragical with that of almost all his predecessors. After Ethelbert's death an universal anarchy prevailed in Northumberland; and the people, having, by so many fatal revolutions, lost all attachment to their government and princes, were well prepared for subjection to a foreign yoke; which Egbert, king of Wessex, finally imposed upon them.

The Kingdom of EAST-ANGLIA.

THE history of this kingdom contains nothing memorable, except the conversion of Earpwold; the fourth king, and great-grandson of Uffa, the founder of the monarchy. The authority of Edwin, king of Northumberland, on whom that prince entirely depended, engaged him to take

this step: But soon after, his wife, who was an idolatress, brought him back to her religion; and he was found unable to resist those allurements, which have seduced the wisest of mankind. After his death, which was violent, like that of most of the Saxon princes, that did not early retire into monasteries, Sigebert, his successor, and half-brother, who had been educated in France, restored Christianity, and introduced learning among the East-Angles. Some pretend that he founded the university of Cambridge, or rather some schools in that place. It is almost impossible, and quite needless to be more particular in relating the transactions of the East-Angles. What instruction or entertainment can it give the reader to hear a long bead-roll of barbarous names, Egric, Annas, Ethelbert, Ethelwald, Aldulf, Elfwald, Beorne, Ethelred, Ethelbert, who successively murdered, expelled, or inherited from each other, and obscurely filled the throne of that kingdom? Ethelbert, the last of these princes was treacherously murdered by Offa, king of Mercia, in the year 792, and his state was thenceforth united with that of Offa, as we shall relate presently.

The Kingdom of MERCIA.

MERCIA, the largest, if not the most powerful kingdom of the Heptarchy, comprehended all the middle counties of England; and as its frontiers extended to those of all the other six king-

C H A P. I. doms, as well as to Wales, it received its name from that circumstance. Wibba, the son of Crida, founder of the monarchy, being placed on the throne by Ethelbert, king of Kent, governed his paternal dominions by a precarious authority; and after his death, Ceorl, his kinsman, was, by the influence of the Kentish monarch, preferred to his son, Penda, whose turbulent character appeared dangerous to that prince. Penda was thus fifty years of age before he mounted the throne; and his temerity and restless disposition were found nowise abated by time, experience, or reflection. He engaged in continual hostilities against all the neighbouring states; and, by his injustice and violence, rendered himself equally odious to his own subjects and to strangers. Sigebert, Egric, and Annas, three kings of East-Anglia, perished successively in battle against him; as did also Edwin and Oswald, the two greatest princes that had reigned over Northumberland. At last, Ofwy, brother to Oswald, having defeated and slain him in a decisive battle, freed the world from this sanguinary tyrant. Peada, his son, mounted the throne of Mercia in 655, and lived under the protection of Ofwy, whose daughter he had espoused. This princess was educated in the Christian faith, and she employed her influence with success, in converting her husband and his subjects to that religion. Thus the fair sex have had the merit of introducing the Christian doctrine into all the most considerable kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy. Peada died

a violent death ⁹⁸. His son, Wolfhere, succeeded to the government; and after having reduced to dependence the kingdoms of Essex and East-Anglia, he left the crown to his brother, Ethelred, who, though a lover of peace, showed himself not unfit for military enterprizes. Besides making a successful expedition into Kent, he repulsed Egfrid, king of Northumberland, who had invaded his dominions; and he slew in battle Elfwin, the brother of that prince. Desirous, however, of composing all animosities with Egfrid, he payed him a sum of money, as a compensation for the loss of his brother. After a prosperous reign of thirty years, he resigned the crown to Kendred, son of Wolfhere and retired into the monastery of Bardney ⁹⁹. Kendred returned the present of the crown to Ceolred, the son of Ethelred; and making a pilgrimage to Rome, passed his life there in penance and devotion. The place of Ceolred was supplied by Ethelbald, great-grand-nephew to Penda by Alwy, his brother; and this prince, being slain in a mutiny, was succeeded by Offa, who was a degree more remote from Penda, by Eawa, another brother.

THIS prince, who mounted the throne in 755 ¹⁰⁰, had some great qualities, and was suc-

⁹⁸ Hugo Candidus. pag. 4. says that he was treacherously murdered by his queen, from whose persuasion he had embraced Christianity; but this account of the matter is found in that historian alone.

⁹⁹ Bede, lib. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Chron. Sax. p. 59.

C H A P. cefsful in his warlike enterprizes againſt Lothaire,
L king of Kent, and Kenwulph, king of Weſſex. He defeated the former in a bloody battle at Otford upon the Darent, and reduced his kingdom to a ſtate of dependence: He gained a victory over the latter at Benſington in Oxfordſhire; and conquering that country, together with that of Gloceſter, annexed both to his dominions. But all theſe ſucceſſes were ſtained by his treacherous murder of Ethelbert, king of the Eaſt-Angles, and his violent ſeizing of that kingdom. This young prince, who is ſaid to have poſſeſſed great merit, had paid his addreſſes to Elfrida, the daughter of Offa, and was invited with all his retinue to Hereford, in order to ſolemnize the nuptials. Amidſt the joy and feſtivity of theſe entertainments, he was ſeized by Offa, and ſecretly beheaded: And though Elfrida, who abhorred her father's treachery had time to give warning to the Eaſt-Anglian nobility, who eſcaped into their own country, Offa, having extinguished the royal family, ſucceeded in his deſign of ſubduing that kingdom¹⁰¹. The perfidious prince, deſirous of re-eſtabliſhing his character in the world, and perhaps of appeaſing the remorſes of his own conſcience, payed great court to the clergy, and practiſed all the monkish devotions, ſo much eſteemed in that ignorant and ſuperſtitious age. He gave the tenth of his goods to the church¹⁰²; beſtowed

¹⁰¹ Brompton, p. 750, 751, 752.

¹⁰² Spacl. Conc. p. 308. Brompton, p. 776.

rich

rich donations on the cathedral of Hereford; and C H A P.
I. even made a pilgrimage to Rome, where his great power and riches could not fail of procuring him the papal absolution. The better to ingratiate himself with the sovereign pontiff, he engaged to pay him a yearly donation for the support of an English college at Rome ¹⁰³, and in order to raise the sum; he imposed a tax of a penny on each house possessed of thirty pence a year. This imposition, being afterwards levied on all England, was commonly denominated Peter's pence ¹⁰⁴; and though conferred at first as a gift, was afterwards claimed as a tribute by the Roman pontiff. Carrying his hypocrisy still farther, Offa, feigning to be directed by a vision from heaven, discovered at Verulam the reliques of St. Alban, the martyr, and endowed a magnificent monastery in that place ¹⁰⁵. Moved by all these acts of piety, Malmesbury, one of the best of the old English historians, declares himself at a loss to determine ¹⁰⁶ whether the merits or crimes of this prince preponderated. Offa died, after a reign of thirty-nine years, in 794 ¹⁰⁷.

THIS prince was become so considerable in the Heptarchy, that the emperor Charlemagne entered into an alliance and friendship with him; a

¹⁰³ Spell. Conc. p. 230. 310. 312.

¹⁰⁴ Higden, lib. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Ingulph. p. 5. W. Malmes. lib. 1. cap. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Lib. 1. cap. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Chron. Sax. p. 65.

E. H. A. P. circumstance, which did honour to Offa; as distant
 I. princes at that time had usually little communication with each other. That emperor being a great lover of learning and learned men, in an age very barren of that ornament, Offa, at his desire, sent him over Alcuin, a clergyman much celebrated for his knowledge, who received great honours from Charlemagne, and even became his preceptor in the sciences. The chief reason, why he had at first desired the company of Alcuin, was that he might oppose his learning to the heresy of Felix, bishop of Urgel in Catalonia; who maintained, that Jesus Christ, considered in his human nature, could, more properly, be denominated the adoptive than the natural son of God ¹⁰⁸. This heresy was condemned in the council of Francfort, held in 794, and consisting of 300 bishops. Such were the questions which were agitated in that age, and which employed the attention, not only of cloystered scholars, but of the wisest and greatest princes ¹⁰⁹.

EGFRITH succeeded to his father, Offa, but survived him only five months ¹¹⁰; when he made way for Kenulph, a descendant of the royal family. This prince waged war against Kent; and taking Egbert, the king, prisoner, he cut off his hands,

¹⁰⁸ Dupin, cent. 8. chap, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Offa, in order to protect his country from Wales, drew a rampart or ditch of a hundred miles in length from Basingwerke in Flintshire to the South sea near Bristol. See *Speed's Description of Wales*.

¹¹⁰ Ingulph. p. 6.

and put out his eyes; leaving Cuthred, his own C H A P.
L. brother, in possession of the crown of that kingdom. Kenulph was killed in an insurrection of the East-Anglians, whose crown his predecessor, Offa, had usurped. He left his son, Kenelm, a minor; who was murdered the same year by his sister, Quendrade, who had entertained the ambitious views of assuming the government ¹¹¹. But she was supplanted by her uncle, Ceolulf; who, two years after, was dethroned by Beornulf. The reign of this usurper, who was not of the royal family, was short and unfortunate: He was defeated by the West-Saxons, and killed by his own subjects, the East-Angles ¹¹². Ludican, his successor, underwent the same fate ¹¹³; and Wiglaff, who mounted this unstable throne, and found every thing in the utmost confusion, could not withstand the fortune of Egbert, who united all the Saxon kingdoms into one great monarchy.

The Kingdom of E S S E X.

THIS kingdom made no great figure in the Heptarchy; and the history of it is very imperfect. Sleda succeeded to his father, Erkinwin, the founder of the monarchy; and made way for his son, Sebert, who, being nephew to Ethelbert, king of Kent, was persuaded by that prince to

¹¹¹ Ingulph. p. 7. Brompton, p. 776.

¹¹² Ingulph. p. 7.

¹¹³ Ann. Beverl. p. 87.

C H A P. embrace the Christian faith ¹¹⁴. His sons and
 I. conjunct successors, Sexted and Seward, relapsed
 into idolatry, and were soon after slain in a battle
 against the West-Saxons. To shew the rude
 manner of living in that age, Bede tells us ¹¹⁵,
 that these two kings expressed great desire to
 eat the white bread, distributed by Mellytus,
 the bishop, at the communion ¹¹⁶. But on his
 refusing them, unless they would submit to be
 baptized, they expelled him their dominions.
 The names of the other princes, who reigned
 successively in Essex, are Sigebert the little, Sigebert
 the good, who restored Christianity, Swithelm,
 Sigheri, Offa. This last prince, having
 made a vow of chastity, notwithstanding his
 marriage with Keneswitha, a Mercian princess,
 daughter to Penda, went in Pilgrimage to Rome,
 and shut himself up during the rest of his life in
 a cloyster. Selred, his successor, reigned thirty-
 eight years; and was the last of the royal line:
 The failure of which threw the kingdom into
 great confusion, and reduced it to dependence
 under Mercia ¹¹⁷. Switherd first acquired the
 crown, by the concession of the Mercian princes;
 and his death made way for Sigeric, who ended
 his life in a pilgrimage to Rome. His successor,

¹¹⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 24.

¹¹⁵ Lib. 2. cap. 5.

¹¹⁶ H. Hunting. lib. 3. Brompton, p. 738. 743. Bede.

¹¹⁷ Malmesb. lib. 1. cap. 6.

Sigered, unable to defend his kingdom, submitted to the victorious arms of Egbert. C H A P.
I.

The Kingdom of S U S S E X.

THE history of this kingdom, the smallest in the Heptarchy, is still more imperfect than that of Essex. Ælla, the founder of the monarchy, left the crown to his son, Cissa, who is chiefly remarkable for his long reign of seventy-six years. During his time, the South-Saxons fell almost into a total dependence on the kingdom of Wessex; and we scarcely know the names of the princes, who were possessed of this titular sovereignty. Adelwalch, the last of them, was subdued in battle by Ceadwalla, king of Wessex, and was slain in the action, leaving two infant sons, who, falling into the hand of the conqueror, were murdered by him. The abbot of Redford opposed the order for this execution; but could only prevail on Ceadwalla to suspend it, till they should be baptized. Bercthun and Audhun, two noblemen of character, resisted some time the violence of the West-Saxons; but their opposition served only to prolong the miseries of their country; and the subduing of this kingdom, was the first step, which the West-Saxons made towards acquiring the sole monarchy of England¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁸ Brompton, p. 800.

C H A P.

The Kingdom of W E S S E X.

I.

THE kingdom of Wesssex, which finally swallowed up all the other Saxon states, met with great resistance on its first establishment; and the Britons, who were now enured to arms, yielded not tamely their possessions to those invaders. Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy, and his son, Kenric, fought many successful, and some unsuccessful battles, against the natives; and the martial spirit, common to all the Saxons, was, by means of these hostilities, carried to the greatest height among this tribe. Ceaulin, who was the son and successor of Kenric, and who began his reign in 560, was still more ambitious and enterprising than his predecessors; and by waging continual war against the Britons, he added a great part of the counties of Devon and Somerset to his other dominions. Carried along by the tide of success, he invaded the other Saxon states in his neighbourhood, and becoming terrible to all, he provoked a general confederacy against him. This alliance proved successful under the conduct of Ethelbert, king of Kent; and Ceaulin, who had lost the affections of his own subjects by his violent disposition, and had now fallen into contempt from his misfortunes, was expelled the throne¹¹⁹, and died in exile and misery. Cuichelme, and Cuthwin, his sons, governed jointly the kingdom, till the expulsion of the latter in 591, and the

¹¹⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 22.

death of the former in 593, made way for Cealric, C H A P. to whom succeeded Ceobald in 593, by whose I. death, which happened in 611, Kynegils inherited the crown. This prince embraced Christianity¹²⁰, through the persuasion of Oswald, king of Northumberland, who had married his daughter, and who had attained a great ascendant in the heptarchy. Kenwalch next succeeded to the monarchy, and dying in 672, left the succession so much disputed, that Sexburga, his widow, a woman of spirit¹²¹, kept possession of the government till her death, which happened two years after. Efcwin then peaceably acquired the crown; and, after a short reign of two years, made way for Kentwin; who governed nine years. Ceodwalla, his successor, mounted not the throne without opposition; but proved a great prince, according to the ideas of those times; that is, he was enterprising, warlike, and successful. He entirely subdued the kingdom of Suffex, and annexed it to his own dominions. He made inroads into Kent; but met with resistance from Widred, the king, who proved successful against Mollo, brother to Ceodwalla, and slew him in a skirmish. Ceodwalla at last, tired with wars and bloodshed, was seized with a fit of devotion; bestowed several endowments on the church; and made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he received baptism, and

¹²⁰ Higden, lib. 5. Chron. Sax. p. 15. Ann. Beverl. p. 94.

¹²¹ Bede, lib. 4. cap. 12. Chron. Sax. p. 41.

CHAP.
I.

died in 689. Ina, his successor, inherited the military virtues of Ceodwalla, and added to them the more valuable ones of justice, policy, and prudence. He made war upon the Britons in Somerset; and having finally subdued that province, he treated the vanquished with an humanity, hitherto unknown to the Saxon conquerors. He allowed the proprietors to retain possession of their lands, encouraged marriages and alliances between them and his ancient subjects, and gave them the privilege of being governed by the same laws. These laws he augmented and ascertained; and though he was disturbed by some insurrections at home, his long reign of thirty-seven years may be regarded as one of the most glorious and most prosperous of the heptarchy. In the decline of his age, he made a pilgrimage to Rome; and after his return, shut himself up in a cloyster, where he died.

THOUGH the kings of Wessex had always been princes of the blood, descended from Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy, the order of succession had been far from exact; and a more remote prince had often found means, to mount the throne, in preference to one descended from a nearer branch of the royal family. Ina, therefore, having no children of his own, and lying much under the influence of Ethelburga, his queen, left by will the succession to Adelard, her brother, who was his remote kinsman: But this destination did not take place without some difficulty. Oswald, a prince more nearly allied to the crown, took

arms against Adelard; but he being suppressed, and dying soon after, the title of Adelard was not any farther disputed; and in the year 741, he was succeeded by his cousin, Cudred. The reign of this prince was distinguished by a great victory, which he obtained, by means of Edelhun, his general, over Ethelbald, king of Mercia. His death made way for Sigebert, his kinsman, who governed so ill, that his people rose in an insurrection, and dethroned him, crowning Cenulph in his stead. The exiled prince found a refuge with duke Cumbran, governor of Hampshire; who, that he might add new obligations to Sigebert, gave him many salutary counsels for his future conduct, accompanied with some reprehensions for the past. But these were so much resented by the ungrateful prince, that he conspired against the life of his protector, and treacherously murdered him. After this infamous action, he was forsaken by all the world; and skulking about in the wilds and forests, was at last discovered by a servant of Cumbran's, who instantly took revenge upon him for the murder of his master ¹²².

CENULPH, who had obtained the crown on the expulsion of Sigebert, was fortunate in many expeditions against the Britons of Cornwall; but afterwards lost some reputation by his ill success against Offa, king of Mercia ¹²³. Kynehard also, brother to the deposed Sigebert, gave him

¹²² Higden, lib. 5. W. Malmes. lib. 1. cap. 2.

¹²³ W. Malmes. lib. 1. cap. 2.

C H A P. disturbance; and though expelled the kingdom, he
 I. hovered on the frontiers, and watched an opportunity for attacking his rival. The king had an intrigue with a young woman, who lived at Merton in Surrey; whither having secretly retired, he was on a sudden environed, in the night-time, by Kynehard and his followers, and after making a vigorous resistance, was murdered, with all his attendants. The nobility and people of the neighbourhood, rising next day in arms, took revenge on Kynehard for the slaughter of their king, and put every one to the sword, who had been engaged in that criminal enterprize. This event happened in 784.

BRITHRIC next obtained possession of the government, though remotely descended from the royal family; but he enjoyed not that dignity without inquietude. Eoppa, nephew to king Ina, by his brother Ingild, who died before that prince, had begot Eata, father to Alchmond, from whom sprung Egbert¹²⁴, a young man of the most promising hopes, who gave great jealousy to Brithric, the reigning prince, both because he seemed by his birth better entitled to the crown, and because he had acquired, to an eminent degree, the affections of the people. Egbert, sensible of his danger from the suspicions of Brithric, secretly withdrew into France¹²⁵; where he was well received by Charlemagne. By living

¹²⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 16.

¹²⁵ H. Hunting. lib. 4.

in the court, and serving in the armies of that prince, the most able and most generous that had appeared in Europe during several ages, he acquired those accomplishments, which afterwards enabled him to make such a shining figure on the throne: And familiarizing himself to the manners of the French, who, as Malmesbury observes ¹²⁶, were eminent both for valour and civility, above all the western nations, he learned to polish the rudeness and barbarity of the Saxon character: His early misfortunes thus proved of singular advantage to him.

It was not long ere Egbert had opportunities of displaying his natural and acquired talents. Brithric, King of Wessex, had married Eadburga, natural daughter of Offa, king of Mercia, a profligate woman, equally infamous for cruelty and for incontinence. Having great influence over her husband, she often instigated him to destroy such of the nobility as were obnoxious to her; and where this expedient failed, she scrupled not being herself active in traiterous attempts against them. She had mixed a cup of poison for a young nobleman, who had acquired her husband's friendship, and had on that account become the object of her jealousy: but unfortunately, the king drank of the fatal cup along with his favourite, and soon after expired ¹²⁷. This

¹²⁶ Lib. 2. cap. II.

¹²⁷ Higden, lib. 5. M. West. p. 152. Asser, in vitâ Alfredi, p. 3. ex edit Camdeni.

C H A P. I. tragical incident, joined to her other crimes, rendered Eadburga so odious, that she was obliged to fly into France; whence Egbert was at the same time recalled by the nobility, in order to ascend the throne of his ancestors¹²⁸. He attained that dignity in the last year of the eighth century.

IN the kingdoms of the heptarchy, an exact rule of succession was either unknown or not strictly observed; and thence the reigning prince was continually agitated with jealousy against all the princes of the blood, whom he still considered as rivals, and whose death alone could give him entire security in his possession of the throne. From this fatal cause, together with the admiration of the monastic life, and the opinion of merit, attending the preservation of chastity even in a married state, the royal families had been entirely extinguished in all the kingdoms except that of Wessex; and the emulations, suspicions, and conspiracies, which had formerly been confined to the princes of the blood alone, were now diffused among all the nobility in the several Saxon states. Egbert was the sole descendant of those first conquerors who subdued Britain, and who enhanced their authority by claiming a pedigree from Woden, the supreme divinity of their ancestors. But that prince, though invited by this favourable circumstance to make attempts on the neighbouring Saxons, gave them for some time no disturbance, and rather chose to turn his

¹²⁸ Chron. Sax. A. D. 800. Brompton, p. 801.

arms against the Britons in Cornwall, whom he defeated in several battles¹²⁹. He was recalled from the conquest of that country by an invasion made upon his dominions by Bernulf, King of Mercia. C H A P.
I.

THE Mercians, before the accession of Egbert, had very nearly attained the absolute sovereignty in the heptarchy: They had reduced the East-Angles under subjection, and established tributary princes in the kingdoms of Kent and Essex. Northumberland was involved in anarchy; and no state of any consequence remained but that of Wessex, which, much inferior in extent to Mercia, was supported solely by the great qualities of its sovereign. Egbert led his army against the invaders; and encountering them at Ellandum in Wiltshire, obtained a complete victory, and by the great slaughter which he made of them in their flight, gave a mortal blow to the power of the Mercians. Whilst he himself, in prosecution of his victory, entered their country on the side of Oxfordshire, and threatened the heart of their dominions; he sent an army into Kent, commanded by Ethelwolph, his eldest son¹³⁰; and expelling Baldred, the tributary king, soon made himself master of that country. The kingdom of Essex was conquered with equal facility; and the East-Angles, from their hatred to the Mercian government, which had been established

¹²⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 69.

¹³⁰ Ethelwerd, lib. 3. cap. 2.

C H A P. I. over them by treachery and violence, and probably exercised with tyranny, immediately rose in arms, and craved the protection of Egbert¹³¹. Bernulf, the Mercian king, who marched against them, was defeated and slain; and two years after, Luðecan, his successor, met with the same fate. These insurrections and calamities facilitated the enterprizes of Egbert, who advanced into the center of the Mercian territories, and made easy conquests over a dispirited and divided people. In order to engage them more easily to submission, he allowed Wiglaf, their countryman, to retain the title of king, whilst he himself exercised the real powers of sovereignty¹³². The anarchy, which prevailed in Northumberland, tempted him to carry still farther his victorious arms; and the inhabitants, unable to resist his power, and desirous of possessing some established form of government, were forward, on his first appearance, to send deputies, who submitted to his authority, and swore allegiance to him as their sovereign. Egbert, however, still allowed to Northumberland, as he had done to Mercia and East-Anglia, the power of electing a king, who paid him tribute, and was dependent on him.

THUS were united all the kingdoms of the heptarchy in one great state, near four hundred years after the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain;

¹³¹ Ethelwerd, cap. 3.

¹³² Ingulph. p. 7, 8. 10.

and the fortunate arms and prudent policy of Egbert at last effectuated what had been so often attempted in vain by so many princes¹³³. Kent, Northumberland, and Mercia, which had successively aspired to general dominion, were now incorporated in his empire; and the other subordinate kingdoms seemed willingly to share the same fate. His territories were nearly of the same extent with what is now properly called England; and a favourable prospect was afforded to the Anglo-Saxons, of establishing a civilized monarchy, possessed of tranquillity within itself, and secure against foreign invasion. This great event happened in the year 827¹³⁴.

THE Saxons, though they had been so long settled in the island, seem not as yet to have been much improved beyond their German ancestors, either in arts, civility, knowledge, humanity, justice, or obedience to the laws. Even Christianity, though it opened the way to connexions between them and the more polished states of Europe, had not hitherto been very effectual, in banishing their ignorance, or softening their barbarous manners. As they received that doctrine through the corrupted channels of Rome, it carried along with it a great mixture of credulity and superstition, equally destructive to the understanding and to morals. The reverence towards saints and reliques seems to have almost supplanted

¹³³ Chron. Sax. p. 71.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

C H A P. the adoration of the supreme being: Monastic
 I. observances were esteemed more meritorious than
 the active virtues: The knowledge of natural
 causes was neglected from the universal belief of
 miraculous interpositions and judgments: Bounty
 to the church atoned for every violence against
 society: And the remorse for cruelty, murder,
 treachery, assassination, and the more robust vices,
 were appeased, not by amendment of life, but
 by penances, servility to the monks; and an
 abject and illiberal devotion¹³⁵. The reverence
 for the clergy had been carried to such a height,
 that, wherever a person appeared in a sacerdotal
 habit, though on the highway, the people flocked
 around him; and showing him all marks of pro-
 found respect, received every word he uttered
 as the most sacred oracle¹³⁶. Even the military
 virtues, so inherent in all the Saxon tribes, began
 to be neglected; and the nobility, preferring the
 security and sloth of the cloyster to the tumults

¹³⁵ These abuses were common to all the European churches; but the priests in Italy, Spain, and Gaul made some atonement for them by other advantages, which they rendered society. For several ages, they were almost all Romans, or, in other words, the ancient natives; and they preserved the Roman language and laws, with some remains of the former civility. But the priests in the heptarchy, after the first missionaries, were wholly Saxons, and almost as ignorant and barbarous as the laity. They contributed, therefore, little to the improvement of the society in knowledge or the arts.

¹³⁶ Bede, lib. 3. cap. 26.

and glory of war, valued themselves chiefly on C H A P. endowing monasteries, of which they assumed the I. government ¹³⁷. The several kings too, being extremely impoverished by continual benefactions to the church, to which the states of their kingdoms had weakly assented, could bestow no rewards on valour or military services, and retained not even sufficient influence to support their government ¹³⁸.

ANOTHER inconvenience, which attended this corrupt species of Christianity, was the superstitious attachment to Rome, and the gradual subjection of the kingdom to a foreign jurisdiction. The Britons, having never acknowledged any subordination to the Roman pontiff, had conducted all ecclesiastical government by their domestic synods and councils: ¹³⁹: But the Saxons, receiving their religion from Roman monks, were taught at the same time a profound reverence for that see, and were naturally led to regard it as the capital of their religion. Pilgrimages to Rome were represented as the most meritorious acts of devotion. Not only noblemen and ladies of rank undertook this tedious journey ¹⁴⁰; but kings themselves, abdicating their crowns, sought for a secure passport to heaven at the feet of the Roman pontiff. New reliques, perpetually sent from

¹³⁷ Bede, lib. 5. cap. 23. Epistola Bedæ ad Egbert.

¹³⁸ Bedæ Epist. ad Egbert.

¹³⁹ Append. to Bede, numb. 10. ex edit. 1722. *Spelman's Conc.* p. 108, 109.

¹⁴⁰ Bede, lib. 5. cap. 7.

C H A P. I. that endless mint of superstition, and magnified by lying miracles, invented in convents, operated on the astonished minds of the multitude. And every prince has attained the eulogies of the monks, the only historians of those ages, not in proportion to his civil and military virtues, but to his devoted attachment towards their order, and his superstitious reverence for Rome.

THE sovereign pontiff, encouraged by this blindness and submissive disposition of the people, advanced every day in his encroachments on the independence of the English churches. Wilfrid, bishop of Lindisferne, the sole prelate of the Northumbrian kingdom, increased this subjection in the eighth century, by his making an appeal to Rome against the decisions of an English synod, which had abridged his diocese by the erection of some new bishoprics ¹⁴¹. Agatho, the pope, readily embraced this precedent of an appeal to his court; and Wilfrid, though the haughtiest and most luxurious prelate of his age ¹⁴², having obtained with the people the character of sanctity, was thus able to lay the foundation of this papal pretension.

THE great topic, by which Wilfrid confounded the imaginations of men, was, that St. Peter, to whose custody the keys of heaven were entrusted, would certainly refuse admittance to every one who should be wanting in respect to his successor. This conceit, well suited to vulgar

¹⁴¹ See Appendix to Bede, numb. 19. Higden, lib. 5.

¹⁴² Eddius vita Vilfr. § 24. 60.

conceptions, made great impresson on the people during several ages; and has not even at present lost all influence in the catholic countries. C H A P.
I.

HAD this abject superstition produced general peace and tranquillity, it had made some atonement for the ills attending it; but, besides the usual avidity of men for power and riches, frivolous controversies in theology, were engendered by it, which were so much the more fatal, as they admitted not, like the others, of any final determination from established possession. The disputes, excited in Britain, were of the most ridiculous kind, and entirely worthy of those ignorant and barbarous ages. There were some intricacies, observed by all the Christian churches, in adjusting the day of keeping Easter; which depended on a complicated consideration of the course of the sun and moon: And it happened that the missionaries, who had converted the Scots and Britons, had followed [a different calendar from that which was observed at Rome, in the age when Augustine converted the Saxons. The priests also of all the Christian churches were accustomed to shave part of their head; but the form given to this tonsure, was different in the former from what was practised in the latter. The Scots and Britons pleaded the antiquity of *their* usages: The Romans, and their disciples, the Saxons, insisted on the universality of *theirs*. That Easter must necessarily be kept by a rule, which comprehended both the day of the year and age of the moon, was agreed by all; that the tonsure

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THE great topic, by which Wilfrid seduced the imaginations of men, was, that he, to whose custody the keys of heaven were committed, would certainly refuse admittance to one who should be wanting in respect to his successor. This conceit, well suited

¹⁴¹ See Appendix to Bede, numb. 19

¹⁴² Eddius vita Wilfr. § 24. 60.

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C H A P. of a priest could not be omitted without the utmost impiety, was a point undisputed: But the Romans and Saxons called their antagonists schismatics; because they celebrated Easter on the very day of the full moon in March, if that day fell on a Sunday, instead of waiting till the Sunday following; and because they shaved the forehead from ear to ear, instead of making that tonsure on the crown of the head, and in a circular form. In order to render their antagonists odious, they affirmed, that, once in seven years, they concurred with the Jews in the time of celebrating that festival¹⁴³: And that they might recommend their own form of tonsure, they maintained, that it imitated symbolically the crown of thorns worn by Christ in his passion; whereas the other form was invented by Simon Magus, without any regard to that representation¹⁴⁴. These controversies had, from the beginning, excited such animosity between the British and Romish priests, that, instead of concurring in their endeavours to convert the idolatrous Saxons, they refused all communion together, and each regarded his opponent as no better than a Pagan¹⁴⁵. The dispute lasted more than a century; and was at last finished, not by men's discovering the folly of it, which would have been too great an effort for human reason to accomplish, but by the entire

¹⁴³ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 19.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. lib. 5. cap. 21. Eddius, § 24.

¹⁴⁵ Bede, lib. 2. cap. 2. 4. 20. Eddius, § 12.

prevalence of the Romish ritual over the Scotch and British¹⁴⁶. Wilfrid, bishop of Lindisferne, acquired great merit, both with the court of Rome and with all the southern Saxons, by expelling the quartodeciman schism, as it was called, from the Northumbrian kingdom, into which the neighbourhood of the Scots had formerly introduced it¹⁴⁷.

THEODORE, archbishop of Canterbury, called, in the year 680, a synod at Hatfield, consisting of all the bishops in Britain¹⁴⁸; where was accepted and ratified the decree of the Lateran council, summoned by Martin, against the heresy of the Monothelites. The council and synod maintained, in opposition to these heretics, that, though the divine and human nature in Christ made but one person; yet had they different inclinations, wills, acts, and sentiments, and that the unity of the person implied not any unity in the consciousness¹⁴⁹. This opinion it seems somewhat difficult to comprehend; and no one, unacquainted with the ecclesiastical history of those ages, could imagine the height of zeal and violence, with which it was then inculcated. The decree of the Lateran council calls the Monothelites impious, execrable, wicked, abominable,

¹⁴⁶ Bede, lib. 5. cap. 16. 22.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. lib. 3. cap. 25. Eddius, §. 12.

¹⁴⁸ Spell. Conc. vol. 1. p. 168.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 171.

C H A P. and even diabolical, and curses and anathematizes
I. them to all eternity ¹⁵⁰.

THE Saxons, from the first introduction of Christianity among them, had admitted the use of images; and perhaps, that religion, without some of those exterior ornaments, had not made so quick a progress with these idolaters: But they had not paid any species of worship or address to images; and this abuse never prevailed among Christians, till it received the sanction of the second council of Nice.

¹⁵⁰ Spell. Conc. vol. i. p. 172, 173, 174.

C H A P. II.

Egbert — Ethelwolf — Ethelbald and Ethelbert — Ethered — Alfred the Great — Edward the elder — Athelstan — Edmund — Edred — Edwy — Edgar — Edward the Martyr.

E G B E R T.

THE Kingdoms of the Heptarchy, though united by so recent a conquest, seemed to be firmly cemented into one state under Egbert; and the inhabitants of the several provinces had lost all desire of revolting from that conqueror, or of restoring their former independent governments. Their language was every where nearly the same, their customs, laws, institutions civil and religious; and as the race of the ancient kings was totally extinct in all the subjected states, the people readily transferred their allegiance to a prince, who seemed to merit it, by the splendour of his victories, the vigour of his administration, and the superior nobility of his birth. An union also in government opened to them the agreeable prospect of future tranquillity; and it appeared more probable, that they would thenceforth become formidable to their neighbours, than be exposed to their inroads and devastations. But these flattering views were soon overcast by the appearance of the Danes,

C H A P.

II.

827.

C H A P. II. who, during some centuries, kept the Anglo-Saxons in perpetual inquietude, committed the most barbarous ravages upon them, and at last reduced them to grievous servitude.

THE emperor Charlemagne, though naturally generous and humane, had been induced by bigotry to exercise great severities upon the Pagan Saxons in Germany, whom he subdued; and besides often ravaging their country with fire and sword, he had in cool blood decimated all the inhabitants for their revolts, and had obliged them, by the most rigorous edicts, to make a seeming compliance with the Christian doctrine. That religion, which had easily made its way among the British-Saxons by insinuation and address, appeared shocking to their German brethren, when imposed on them by the violence of Charlemagne; and the most generous and warlike of these Pagans had fled northward into Jutland, in order to escape the fury of his persecutions. Meeting there with a people of similar manners, they were readily received among them; and they soon stimulated the natives to concur in enterprizes, which both promised revenge on the haughty conqueror, and afforded subsistence to those numerous inhabitants, with which the northern countries were now overburthened¹. They invaded the provinces of France, which were exposed by the degeneracy and dissensions of Charlemagne's posterity; and being there

¹ Ypod. Neustria, p. 414.

known under the general name of Normans, which they received from their northern situation, they became the terror of all the maritime and even of the inland countries. They were also tempted to visit England in their frequent excursions; and being able, by sudden inroads, to make great progress over a people, who were not defended by any naval force, who had relaxed their military institutions, and who were sunk into a superstition, which had become odious to the Danes and ancient Saxons, they made no distinction in their hostilities between the French and English kingdoms. Their first appearance in this island was in the year 787², when Brithric reigned in Wessex. A small body of them landed in that kingdom, with a view of learning the state of the country; and when the magistrate of the place questioned them concerning their enterprise, and summoned them to appear before the king, and account for their intentions, they killed him, and flying to their ships, escaped into their own country. The next alarm was given to Northumberland in the year 794³; when a body of these pirates pillaged a monastery; but their ships being much damaged by a storm, and their leader slain in a skirmish, they were at last defeated by the inhabitants, and the remainder of them put to the sword. Five years after Egbert had established his monarchy over England, the Danes

C H A P.
II.

8321

² Chron. Sax. p. 64.

³ Ibid. p. 66. Alur. Beverl. p. 108.

C H A P. II. landed in the Isle of Shepey, and having pillaged it, escaped with impunity⁴. They were not so fortunate in their next year's enterprize, when they disembarked from thirty-five ships, and were encountered by Egbert, at Charmouth in Dorsetshire. The battle was bloody; but though the Danes lost great numbers, they maintained the post, which they had taken, and thence made good their retreat to their ships⁵. Having learned by experience, that they must expect a vigorous resistance from this warlike prince, they entered into an alliance with the Britons of Cornwall; and landing two years after in that country, made an inroad with their confederates into the county of Devon; but were met at Hengestdown by Egbert, and totally defeated⁶. While England remained in this state of anxiety, and defended itself more by temporary expedients than by any regular plan of administration, Egbert, who alone was able to provide effectually against this new evil, unfortunately died; and left the government to his son, Ethelwolf.

838.

E T H E L W O L F.

THIS prince had neither the abilities nor the vigour of his father; and was better qualified

⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 72.

⁵ Ibid. Ethelward, lib. 3. cap. 2.

⁶ Chron. Sax. p. 72.

for governing a convent than a kingdom'. He began his reign with making a partition of his dominions, and delivering over to his eldest son, Athelstan, the new conquered provinces of Essex, Kent, and Suffex. But no inconveniencies seem to have arisen from this partition; as the continual terror of the Danish invasions prevented all domestic dissension. A fleet of these ravagers, consisting of thirty-three sail, appeared at Southampton; but were repulsed with loss by Wolfhere, governor of the neighbouring county⁷. The same year, Æthelhelm, governor of Dorsetshire, routed another band which had disembarked at Portsmouth; but he obtained the victory after a furious engagement, and he bought it with the loss of his life⁸. Next year, the Danes made several inroads into England; and fought battles, or rather skirmishes, in East-Anglia and Lindsey and Kent; where, though they were sometimes repulsed and defeated, they always obtained their end, of committing spoil upon the country, and carrying off their booty. They avoided coming to a general engagement, which was not suited to their plan of operations. Their vessels were small, and ran easily up the creeks and rivers; where they drew them ashore, and having formed an entrenchment around them, which they guarded with part of their number, the

⁷ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 2.

⁸ Chron. Sax. p. 73. Ethelward, lib. 3. cap. 3.

⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 73. H. Hunting. lib. 5.

C H A P. remainder scattered themselves every where, and
 II. carrying off the inhabitants and cattle and goods, they
 hastened to their ships, and quickly disappeared. If the military force of the county were assembled, (for there was no time for troops to march from a distance) the Danes either were able to repulse them and to continue their ravages with impunity, or they betook themselves to their vessels; and setting sail, suddenly invaded some distant quarter, which was not prepared for their reception. Every part of England was held in continual alarm; and the inhabitants of one county durst not give assistance to those of another, lest their own families and property should in the mean time be exposed by their absence to the fury of these barbarous ravagers¹⁹. All orders of men were involved in this calamity; and the priests and monks, who had been commonly spared in the domestic quarrels of the heptarchy, were the chief objects on which the Danish idolaters exercised their rage and animosity. Every season of the year was dangerous; and the absence of the enemy was no reason why any man could esteem himself a moment in safety.

351.

THESE incursions had now become almost annual; when the Danes, encouraged by their successes against France as well as England (for both kingdoms were alike exposed to this dreadful calamity) invaded the last in so numerous a body, as seemed to threaten it with universal

¹⁹ Alured Beverl. p. 108.

subjection. But the English, more military than the Britons, whom, a few centuries before, they had treated with like violence, roused themselves with a vigour proportioned to the exigency. Ceorle, governor of Devonshire, fought a battle with one body of the Danes at Wiganburgh¹¹, and put them to rout with great slaughter. King Athelstan attacked another at sea near Sandwich, sunk nine of their ships, and put the rest to flight¹². A body of them, however, ventured, for the first time, to take up winter-quarters in England, and receiving in the spring a strong reinforcement of their countrymen in 350 vessels, they advanced from the Isle of Thanet, where they had stationed themselves; burnt the cities of London and Canterbury; and having put to flight Brictric, who now governed Mercia, under the title of King, they marched into the heart of Surrey, and laid every place waste around them. Ethelwolf, impelled by the urgency of the danger, marched against them, at the head of the West-Saxons; and carrying with him his second son, Ethelbald, gave them battle at Okely, and gained a bloody victory over them. This advantage procured but a short respite to the English. The Danes still maintained their settlement in the Isle of Thanet; and being attacked by Ealher and Huda, governors of Kent and Surrey, though defeated in the beginning of the action, they

853.

¹¹ H. Hunt. lib. 5. Ethelward, lib. 3. cap. 3. Simeon Dunelm. p. 120.

¹² Chron. Sax. p. 74. Asserius, p. 2.

C H A P. II. finally repulsed the assailants, and killed both the governors. They removed thence to the isle of Shepey; where they took up their winter-quarters, that they might farther extend their devastation and ravages.

THIS unsettled state of England hindered not Ethelwolf from making a pilgrimage to Rome; whither he carried his fourth, and favourite son, Alfred, then only six years of age¹³. He passed there a twelvemonth in exercises of devotion; and failed not in that most essential part of devotion, liberality to the church of Rome. Besides giving presents to the most distinguished ecclesiastics, he made a perpetual grant of three hundred mancuses¹⁴ a year to that see; one third to support the lamps of St. Peter's, another those of St. Paul's, a third to the pope himself¹⁵. In his return home, he married Judith, daughter of the emperor, Charles the Bald; but on his landing in England, he met with an opposition, which he little looked for.

His eldest son, Athelstan, being dead, Ethelbald, his second, who had assumed the government, formed, in concert with many of the nobles, the project of excluding his father from a throne, which his weakness and superstition seem to have rendered him so ill-qualified to fill. The people were divided between the two princes; and a bloody

¹³ Afferius, p. 2. Chron. Sax. 76. Hunt. lib. 5.

¹⁴ A mancus was about the weight of our present half crown: See Spellman's Glossary, in verbo Mancus.

¹⁵ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 2.

civil war, joined to all the other calamities under which the English laboured, appeared inevitable; when, Ethelwolf had the facility to yield to the greater part of his son's pretensions. He made with him a partition of the kingdom; and taking to himself the eastern part, which was always at that time esteemed the least considerable, as well as the most exposed¹⁶, he delivered over to Ethelbald the sovereignty of the western. Immediately after, he summoned the states of the whole kingdom, and with the same facility conferred a perpetual and important donation on the church.

THE ecclesiastics, in those days of ignorance, made rapid advances in the acquisition of power and grandeur; and inculcating the most absurd and most interested doctrines, though they sometimes met, from the contrary interests of the laity, with an opposition which it required time and address to overcome, they found no obstacle in their reason or understanding. Not content with the donations of land made them by the Saxon princes and nobles, and with temporary oblations from the devotion of the people, they had cast a wishful eye on a vast revenue, which they claimed as belonging to them, by a sacred and indefeasible title. However little versed in the scriptures, they had been able to discover, that, under the Jewish law, a tenth of all the produce of land

¹⁶ Afferius, p. 3. W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 2. Matth. West. p. 1. 8.

C H A P. was conferred on the priests ; and forgetting ,
 II. what they themselves taught , that the moral part only of that law was obligatory on Christians , they insisted , that this donation conveyed a perpetual property , inherent by divine right in those who officiated at the altar. During some centuries , the whole scope of sermons and homilies was directed to this purpose ; and one would have imagined , from the general tenor of these discourses , that all the practical parts of Christianity were comprised in the exact and faithful payment of tythes to the clergy¹⁷. Encouraged by their success in inculcating these doctrines , they ventured farther than they were warranted even by the Levitical law , and pretended to draw the tenth of all industry , merchandize , wages of labourers , and pay of soldiers¹⁸ ; nay , some canonists went so far as to affirm , that the clergy were entitled to the tythe of the profits , made by courtezans in the exercise of their profession¹⁹. Though parishes had been instituted in England by Honorius , archbishop of Canterbury , near two centuries before²⁰ , the ecclesiastics had never yet been able to get possession of the tythes : They therefore seized the present favourable opportunity of making that acquisition ;

¹⁷ Padre Piaolo , sopra i beneficii ecclesiastici , p. 51, 52. edit. Colon. 1675.

¹⁸ Spell. Conc. vol. 1. p. 268.

¹⁹ Padre Paolo , p. 132.

²⁰ Parker , p. 77.

when

when a weak, superstitious prince filled the throne, and when the people, discouraged by their losses from the Danes, and terrified with the fear of future invasions, were susceptible of any impression, which bore the appearance of religion²¹. So meritorious was this concession deemed by the English, that, trusting entirely to supernatural assistance, they neglected the ordinary means of safety; and agreed, even in the present desperate extremity, that the revenues of the church should be exempted from all burthens, though imposed for national defence and security²².

ETHELBALD and ETHELBERT.

ETHELWOLF lived only two years after making this grant; and by his will he shared England between his two eldest sons, Ethelbald and Ethelbert; the west being assigned to the former; the east to the latter. Ethelbald was a profligate prince; and marrying Judith, his mother-in-law, gave great offence to the people; but moved by the remonstrances of Swithun, bishop of Winchester, he was at last prevailed on to divorce her. His reign was short; and Ethelbert, his brother, succeeding to the government, behaved himself, during a reign of five years, in a manner more worthy of his birth and

857.

860.

²¹ Ingulf. p. 862. Selden's Hist. of tythes, cap. 8.

²² Asserius, p. 2. Chron. Sax. p. 76. W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 2. Ethelward, lib. 3. cap. 3. M. West. p. 158. Ingulf. p. 17. Ann. Beverl. p. 95.

C H A P. station. The kingdom, however, was still infested
 II. by the Danes, who made an inroad and sacked
 Winchester; but were there defeated. A body
 also of these pirates, who were quartered in the
 isle of Thanet, having deceived the English by
 a treaty, unexpectedly broke into Kent, and
 committed great outrages.

ETHERED.

866.

ETHELBERT was succeeded by his brother
 Ethered, who, though he defended himself with
 bravery, enjoyed during his whole reign, no
 tranquillity from those Danish irruptions. His
 younger brother, Alfred, seconded him in all his
 enterprizes; and generously sacrificed to the public
 good all resentment, which he might entertain,
 on account of his being excluded by Ethered
 from a large patrimony, which had been left
 him by his father.

THE first landing of the Danes in the reign of
 Ethered was among the East-Angles, who, more
 anxious for their present safety than for the com-
 mon interest, entered into a separate treaty with
 the enemy; and furnished them with horses,
 which enabled them to make an irruption by
 land into the kingdom of Northumberland.
 They there seized the city of York; and defended
 it against Osbricht and Ælla, two Northumbrian
 princes, who perished in the assault²³. Encouraged

²³ Affer. p. 6. Chron. Sax. p. 79.

by these successes, and by the superiority, which they had acquired in arms, they now ventured, under the command of Hinguar and Hubba, to leave the sea-coast, and penetrating into Mercia, they took up their winter-quarters at Nottingham, where they threatened the kingdom with a final subjection. The Mercians, in this extremity, applied to Ethered for succour; and that prince, with his brother, Alfred, conducting a great army to Nottingham, obliged the enemy to dislodge and to retreat into Northumberland. Their restless disposition, and their avidity for plunder, allowed them not to remain long in those quarters: They broke into East-Anglia, defeated and took prisoner, Edmund, the king of that country, whom they afterwards murdered in cool blood; and committing the most barbarous ravages on the people, particularly on the monasteries, they gave the East-Angles great cause to regret the temporary relief, which they had obtained, by assisting the common enemy.

870.

THE next station of the Danes was at Reading; whence they infested the neighbouring country by their incursions. The Mercians, desirous of shaking off their dependence on Ethered, refused to join him with their forces; and that prince, attended by Alfred, was obliged to march against the enemy, with the West-Saxons alone, his hereditary subjects. The Danes, being defeated in an action, shut themselves up in their garrison; but quickly making thence an irruption, they

871.

C H A P. II. routed the West-Saxons, and obliged them to raise the siege. An action soon after ensued at Aston, in Berkshire, where the English, in the beginning of the day, were in danger of a total defeat. Alfred, advancing with one division of the army, was surrounded by the enemy in a disadvantageous ground; and Ethered, who was at that time hearing mass, refused to march to his assistance, till prayers should be finished²⁴: But as he afterwards obtained the victory, this success, not the danger of Alfred, was ascribed by the monks to the piety of that monarch. This battle of Aston did not terminate the war: Another battle was a little after fought at Basing; where the Danes were more successful; and being reinforced by a new army from their own country became every day more terrible to the English. Amidst these confusions, Ethered died of a wound, which he had received in an action with the Danes; and left the inheritance of his cares and misfortunes, rather than of his grandeur, to his brother, Alfred, who was now twenty-two years of age.

A L F R E D.

871.

THIS prince gave very early marks of those great virtues and shining talents, by which, during the most difficult times, he saved his

²⁴ Affer. p. 7. W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 3. Simeon Dunelm. p. 125. *Anglia Sacra*, vol. i. p. 205.

country from utter ruin and subversion. Ethelwolf, his father, the year after his return with Alfred from Rome, had again sent the young prince thither with a numerous retinue; and a report being spread of the king's death, the pope, Leo III. gave Alfred the royal unction²⁵: whether prognosticating his future greatness from the appearances of his pregnant genius, or willing to pretend, even in that age, to the right of conferring kingdoms. Alfred, on his return home, became every day more the object of his father's affections; but being indulged in all youthful pleasures, he was much neglected in his education; and he had already reached his twelfth year, when he was yet totally ignorant of the lowest elements of literature. His genius was first roused by the recital of Saxon poems, in which the queen took delight; and this species of erudition, which is sometimes able to make a considerable progress even among barbarians, expanded those noble and elevated sentiments, which he had received from nature²⁶. Encouraged by the queen, and stimulated by his own ardent inclination, he soon learned to read those compositions; and proceeded thence to acquire the knowledge of the Latin tongue, in which he met with authors, that better prompted his heroic spirit, and directed his generous views. Absorbed in these elegant pursuits, he regarded

C H A P.
II.

²⁵ Asser. p. 2. W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 2. Ingulf, p. 869. Simeon Dunelm. p. 120. 139.

²⁶ Asser. p. 5. M. West. p. 167.

C H A P. II. his accession to royalty rather as an object of regret than of triumph ²⁷; but being called to the throne, in preference to his brother's children, as well by the will of his father, a circumstance which had great authority with the Anglo-Saxons²⁸, as by the vows of the whole nation and the urgency of public affairs, he shook off his literary indolence, and exerted himself in the defence of his people. He had scarcely buried his brother, when he was obliged to take the field, in order to oppose the Danes, who had seized Wilton, and were exercising their usual ravages on the countries around. He marched against them with the few troops, which he could assemble on a sudden; and giving them battle, gained at first an advantage, but by his pursuing the victory too far, the superiority of the enemy's numbers prevailed, and recovered them the day. Their loss, however, in the action was so considerable, that, fearing Alfred would receive daily reinforcement from his subjects, they were content to stipulate for a safe retreat, and promised to depart the kingdom. For that purpose they were conducted to London, and allowed to take up winter-quarters there; but, careless of their engagements, they immediately set themselves to the committing of spoil on the neighbouring country. Burrhed, king of Mercia, in whose territories London was situated, made a new

²⁷ Affer. p. 7.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 22. Simeon Dunelm. p. 121.

stipulation with them, and engaged them, by presents of money, to remove to Lindefey in Lincolnshire; a country which they had already reduced to ruin and desolation. Finding therefore no object in that place, either for their rapine or violence, they suddenly turned back upon Mercia, in a quarter where they expected to find it without defence, and fixing their station at Repton in Derbyshire, they laid the whole country desolate with fire and sword. Burghed, despairing of success against an enemy, whom no force could resist, and no treaties bind, abandoned his kingdom, and flying to Rome, took shelter in a cloyster²⁹. He was brother-in-law to Alfred, and the last who bore the title of king in Mercia.

THE West-Saxons were now the only remaining power in England; and though supported by the vigour and abilities of Alfred, they were unable to sustain the efforts of those ravagers, who from all quarters invaded them. A new swarm of Danes came over this year under three princes, Guthrum, Oscitel, and Amund; and having first joined their countrymen at Repton, they soon found the necessity of separating, in order to provide for their subsistence. Part of them, under the command of Haldene, their chieftain³⁰, marched into Northumberland,

875.

²⁹ Affer. p. 8. Chron. Sax. p. 82. Ethelward, lib. 4. cap. 4.

³⁰ Chron Sax. p. 83.

C H A P. where they fixed their quarters; part of them
 II. took quarters at Cambridge, whence they dislodged in the ensuing summer, and seized Wereham, in the county of Dorset, the very center of Alfred's dominions. That prince so straitened them in these quarters, that they were content to come to a treaty with him, and stipulated to depart his country. Alfred, well acquainted with their usual perfidy, obliged them to swear upon the holy reliques to the observance of the treaty³¹; not that he expected they would pay any veneration to the reliques; but he hoped, that, if they now violated this oath, their impiety would infallibly draw down upon them the vengeance of heaven. But the Danes, little apprehensive of the danger, suddenly, without seeking any pretence, fell upon Alfred's army; and having put it to rout, marched westward, and took possession of Exeter. The prince collected new forces; and exerted such vigour, that he fought in one year eight battles with the enemy³², and reduced them to the utmost extremity. He hearkened however to new proposals of peace; and was satisfied to stipulate with them, that they would settle somewhere in England³³, and would not permit the entrance of more ravagers into the kingdom. But while he was expecting the

³¹ Affer. p. 8.

³² Ibid. p. 8. The Saxon Chronicle, p. 82. says nine battles.

³³ Affer. p. 9. Alur. Beverl. p. 104.

execution of this treaty, which it seemed the interest of the Danes themselves to fulfil, he heard that another body had landed, and having collected all the scattered troops of their countrymen, had surprized Chippenham, then a considerable town, and were exercising their usual ravages all around them.

THIS last incident quite broke the spirit of the Saxons, and reduced them to despair. Finding that, after all the miserable havoc, which they had undergone in their persons and in their property; after all the vigorous actions, which they had exerted in their own defence; a new band, equally greedy of spoil and slaughter, had disembarked among them; they believed themselves abandoned by heaven to destruction, and delivered over to those swarms of robbers, which the fertile north thus incessantly poured forth against them. Some left their country, and retired into Wales or fled beyond sea: Others submitted to the conquerors, in hopes of appeasing their fury by a servile obedience³⁴: And every man's attention being now engrossed in concern for his own preservation, no one would hearken to the exhortations of the King, who summoned them to make, under his conduct, one effort more in defence of their prince, their country, and their liberties. Alfred himself was obliged to relinquish the ensigns of his dignity, to dismiss his servants, and to seek shelter, in the meanest disguises,

³⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 84. Alfred Beverl. p. 105.

C H A P. II. from the pursuit and fury of his enemies. He concealed himself under a peasant's habit, and lived some time in the house of a neat-herd, who had been entrusted with the care of some of his cows³⁵. There passed here an incident, which has been recorded by all the historians, and was long preserved by popular tradition; though it contains nothing memorable in itself, except so far as every circumstance is interesting which attends so much virtue and dignity, reduced to such distress. The wife of the neat-herd was ignorant of the condition of her royal guest; and observing him one day busy by the fire-side in trimming his bow and arrows, she desired him to take care of some cakes, which were toasting, while she was employed elsewhere in other domestic affairs. But Alfred, whose thoughts were otherwise engaged, neglected this injunction; and the good woman, on her return, finding her cakes all burnt, rated the king very severely, and upbraided him, that he always seemed very well pleased to eat her warm cakes, though he was thus negligent in toasting them³⁶.

By degrees, Alfred, as he found the search of the enemy become more remiss, collected some of his retainers, and retired into the center of a bog, formed by the stagnating waters of the Thone and Parret, in Somersetshire. He here found two acres of firm ground; and building an

³⁵ Affer. p. 9.

³⁶ Ibid. M. West. p. 170.

habitation on them, rendered himself secure by its fortifications, and still more by the unknown and inaccessible roads which led to it, and by the forests and morasses, with which it was every way environed. This place he called Æthelingay, or the isle of nobles³⁷; and it now bears the name of Athelney. He thence made frequent and unexpected sallies upon the Danes, who often felt the vigour of his arm, but knew not from what quarter the blow came. He subsisted himself and his followers by the plunder which he acquired; he procured them consolation by revenge; and from small successes, he opened their minds to hope, that, notwithstanding his present low condition, more important victories might at length attend his valour.

ALFRED lay here concealed, but not unactive, during a twelvemonth; when the news of a prosperous event reached his ears, and called him to the field. Hubba, the Dane, having spread devastation, fire, and slaughter, over Wales, had landed in Devonshire from twenty-three vessels; and laid siege to the castle of Kinwith, a place situated near the mouth of the small river Tau. Oddune, earl of Devonshire, with his followers, had taken shelter there; and being ill supplied with provisions, and even with water, he determined, by some vigorous blow, to prevent the necessity of submitting to the barbarous

³⁷ Chron. Sax. p. 85. W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 4. Ethelward, lib. 4. cap. 4. Ingulf, p. 26.

CHAP. II. enemy. He made a sudden sally on the Danes before sun-rising; and taking them unprepared, he put them to rout, pursued them with great slaughter, killed Hubba himself, and got possession of the famous *Reafen*, or enchanted standard, in which the Danes put great confidence³⁸. It contained the figure of a raven, which had been inwoven by the three sisters of Hinguar and Hubba, with many magical incantations, and which, by its different movements, prognosticated, as the Danes believed, the good or bad success of any enterprize³⁹.

WHEN Alfred observed this symptom of successful resistance in his subjects, he left his retreat; but before he would assemble them in arms, or urge them to any attempt, which, if unfortunate, might, in their present despondency, prove fatal, he resolved to inspect, himself, the situation of the enemy, and to judge of the probability of success. For this purpose he entered their camp under the disguise of a harper, and passed unsuspected through every quarter. He so entertained them with his music and facetious humours, that he met with a welcome reception; and was even introduced to the tent of Guthrum, their prince, where he remained some days⁴⁰. He remarked the supine security of the Danes, their contempt

³⁸ Affer. p. 10. Chron. Sax. p. 84. Abbas Rieval. p. 395. Alured Beverl. p. 105.

³⁹ Affer. p. 10.

⁴⁰ W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 4.

of the English, their negligence in foraging and plundering, and their dissolute wasting of what they gained by rapine and violence. Encouraged by these favourable appearances, he secretly sent emissaries to the most considerable of his subjects, and summoned them to a rendezvous, attended by their warlike followers, at Brixton, on the borders of Selwood forest ⁴¹. The English, who had hoped to put an end to their calamities by servile submission, now found the insolence and rapine of the conqueror more intolerable than all past fatigues and dangers; and, at the appointed day, they joyfully resorted to their prince. On his appearance, they received him with shouts of applause ⁴²; and could not satiate their eyes with the sight of this beloved monarch, whom they had long regarded as dead, and who now, with voice and looks expressing his confidence of success, called them to liberty and to vengeance. He instantly conducted them to Eddington, where the Danes were encamped; and taking advantage of his previous knowledge of the place, he directed his attack against the most unguarded quarter of the enemy. The Danes, surprised to see an army of English, whom they considered as totally subdued, and still more astonished to hear that Alfred was at their head, made but a faint resistance, notwithstanding their superiority of number; and were soon put to flight with great slaughter.

⁴¹ Chron. Sax. p. 85.

⁴² Affer. p. 10. Chron. Sax. p. 85. Simeon Dunelm. p. 128. Alfred Beverl. p. 105. Abbas Rieval. p. 354.

C H A P. II. The remainder of the routed army, with their prince, was besieged by Alfred in a fortified camp, to which they fled; but being reduced to extremity by want and hunger, they had recourse to the clemency of the victor, and offered to submit on any conditions. The king, no less generous than brave, gave them their lives; and even formed a scheme for converting them, from mortal enemies, into faithful subjects and confederates. He knew, that the kingdoms of East-Anglia and Northumberland were totally desolated by the frequent inroads of the Danes; and he now purposed to re-people them by settling there Guthrum and his followers. He hoped that the new planters would at last betake themselves to industry, when, by reason of his resistance, and the exhausted condition of the country, they could no longer subsist by plunder; and that they might serve him as a rampart against any future incursions of their countrymen. But before he ratified these mild conditions with the Danes, he required, that they should give him one pledge of their submission, and of their inclination to incorporate with the English, by declaring their conversion to Christianity⁴³. Guthrum and his army had no aversion to the proposal; and, without much instruction or argument or conference, they were all admitted to baptism. The king answered for Guthrum at the

⁴³ Chron. Sax. p. 85.

font, gave him the name of Athelstan, and received him as his adopted son ⁴⁴. C H A P.
II.

THE success of this expedient seemed to correspond to Alfred's hopes: The greater part of the Danes settled peaceably in their new quarters: Some smaller bodies of the same nation, which were dispersed in Mercia, were distributed into the five cities of Darby, Leicester, Stamford, Lincoln, and Nottingham, and were thence called the Fif or Five Burgers. The more turbulent and unquiet made an expedition into France under the command of Hastings ⁴⁵; and except by a short incursion of Danes, who sailed up the Thames and landed at Fulham, but suddenly retreated to their ships, on finding the country in a posture of defence, Alfred was not for some years interrupted by the inroads of those barbarians ⁴⁶.

THE king employed this interval of tranquillity in restoring order to the state, which had been shaken by so many violent convulsions; in establishing civil and military institutions; in composing the minds of men to industry and justice; and in providing against the return of like calamities. He was, more properly than his grandfather Egbert, the sole monarch of the English, (for so the Saxons were now universally called) because the kingdom of Mercia was at last incorporated in his state, and was governed by Ethelbert, his brother-in-law, who bore the title of Earl: And

⁴⁴ Asser. p. 10. Chron. Sax. p. 90.

⁴⁵ W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 4. Ingulf. p. 26.

⁴⁶ Asser. p. 11.

C H A P. II. though the Danes, who peopled East-Anglia and Northumberland, were for some time ruled immediately by their own princes, they all acknowledged a subordination to Alfred, and submitted to his superior authority. As equality among subjects is the great source of concord, Alfred gave the same laws to the Danes and English, and put them entirely on a like footing in the administration both of civil and criminal justice. The fine for the murder of a Dane was the same with that for the murder of an Englishman; the great symbol of equality in those ages.

THE king, after rebuilding the ruined cities, particularly London ⁴⁷, which had been destroyed by the Danes in the reign of Ethelwolf, established a regular militia for the defence of the kingdom. He ordained that all his people should be armed and registered; he assigned them a regular rotation of duty; he distributed part into the castles and fortresses, which he built at proper places ⁴⁸; he required another part to take the field on any alarm, and to assemble at stated places of rendezvous; and he left a sufficient number at home, who were employed in the cultivation of the land, and who afterwards took their turn in military service ⁴⁹. The whole kingdom was like

⁴⁷ Affer. p. 15. Chron. Sax. p. 88. M. West. p. 171. Simeon Dunelm. p. 131. Brompton, p. 812. Alured Beverl. ex edit. Hearne, p. 106.

⁴⁸ Affer. p. 18. Ingulf, p. 27.

⁴⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 92, 93.

one great garrison; and the Danes could no sooner appear in one place, than a sufficient number was assembled to oppose them, without leaving the other quarters defenceless or disarmed ⁵⁰.

C H A P.

II.

BUT Alfred, sensible that the proper method of opposing an enemy, who made incursions by sea, was to meet them on their own element, took care to provide himself with a naval force ⁵¹, which, though the most natural defence of an island, had hitherto been totally neglected by the English. He increased the shipping of his kingdom both in number and strength, and trained his subjects in the practice as well of sailing, as of naval action. He distributed his armed vessels in proper stations around the island, and was sure to meet the Danish ships either before or after they had landed their troops, and to pursue them in all their incursions. Though the Danes might suddenly, by surprise, disembark on the coast, which was generally become desolate by their frequent ravages, they were encountered by the English fleet in their retreat, and escaped not, as formerly, by abandoning their booty, but paid, by their total destruction, the penalty of the disorders which they had committed.

IN this manner, Alfred repelled several inroads of these piratical Danes, and maintained his kingdom, during some years, in safety and tranquillity. A fleet of a hundred and twenty ships

⁵⁰ Spellman's life of Alfred, p. 147. edit. 1709.

⁵¹ Affer. p. 9. M. West. p. 179.

C H A P.

II.

893.

of war was stationed upon the coast; and being provided with warlike engines, as well as with expert seamen, both Frisians and English, (for Alfred supplied the defects of his own subjects by engaging able foreigners in his service) maintained a superiority over those smaller bands, with which England had so often been infested⁵². But at last Hastings the famous Danish chief, having ravaged all the provinces of France, both along the sea-coast and the Loire and Seine, and being obliged to quit that country, more by the desolation which he himself had occasioned, than by the resistance of the inhabitants, appeared off the coast of Kent with a fleet of 330 sail. The greater part of the enemy disembarked in the Rother, and seized the fort of Apuldore. Hastings himself, commanding a fleet of eighty sail, entered the Thames, and fortifying Milton in Kent, began to spread his forces over the country, and to commit the most destructive ravages. But Alfred, on the first alarm of this descent, flew to the defence of his people, at the head of a select band of soldiers, whom he always kept about his person⁵³; and gathering to him the armed militia from all quarters, appeared in the field with a force superior to the enemy. All straggling parties, whom necessity or love of plunder had drawn to a distance from their chief encampment,

⁵² Asser. p. 11. Chron. Sax. p. 86, 87. M. West. p. 176.

⁵³ Asser. p. 19.

were cut off by the English ⁵⁴; and these pirates, instead of increasing their spoil, found themselves cooped up in their fortifications, and obliged to subsist by the plunder which they had brought from France. Tired of this situation, which must in the end prove ruinous to them, the Danes at Apuldore rose suddenly from their encampment, with an intention of marching towards the Thames, and passing over into Essex: But they escaped not the vigilance of Alfred, who encountered them at Farnham, put them to rout ⁵⁵, seized all their horses and baggage, and chased the runaways on board their ships, which carried them up the Colne to Mersey in Essex, where they entrenched themselves. Hastings, at the same time, and probably by concert, made a like movement; and deserting Milton, took possession of Bamflete, near the isle of Canvey in the same county ⁵⁶; where he hastily threw up fortifications for his defence against the power of Alfred.

UNFORTUNATELY for the English, Guthrum, prince of the East-Anglian Danes, was now dead; as was also Guthred, whom the king had appointed governor of the Northumbrians; and those restless tribes, being no longer restrained by the authority of their princes, and being encouraged by the appearance of so great a body of their countrymen, broke into rebellion, shook

⁵⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 92.

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 93. Flor. Wigorn. p. 595.

⁵⁶ Chron. Sax. p. 93.

C H A P. off the authority of Alfred, and yielding to their
 II. inveterate habits of war and depredation⁵⁷, embarked on board two hundred and forty vessels, and appeared before Exeter in the west of England. Alfred lost not a moment in opposing this new enemy. Having left some forces at London to make head against Hastings and the other Danes, he marched suddenly to the west⁵⁸; and falling on the rebels before they were aware, pursued them to their ships with great slaughter. These ravagers, sailing next to Suffex, began to plunder the country near Chichester; but the order, which Alfred had every where established, sufficed here, without his presence, for the defence of the place; and the rebels, meeting with a new repulse, in which many of them were killed, and some of their ships taken⁵⁹, were obliged to put again to sea, and were discouraged from attempting any other enterprize.

MEANWHILE, the Danish invaders in Essex, having united their force under the command of Hastings, advanced into the inland country, and made spoil of all around them; but soon had reason to repent of their temerity. The English army, left in London, assisted by a body of the citizens, attacked the enemy's entrenchments at Bamflete, overpowered the garrison, and having done great execution upon them, carried off the

⁵⁷ Chron. Sax. p. 92.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Sax. p. 93.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Sax. p. 96. Flor. Wigorn. p. 596.

wife and two sons of Hastings ⁶⁰. Alfred¹ generously spared these captives; and even restored them to Hastings ⁶¹, on condition that he should depart the kingdom. C H A P. II.

BUT though the king had thus honourably rid himself of this dangerous enemy, he had not entirely subdued or expelled the invaders. The piratical Danes willingly followed in an excursion any prosperous leader, who gave them hopes of booty; but were not so easily induced to relinquish their enterprize, or submit to return, baffled and without plunder, into their native country. Great numbers of them, after the departure of Hastings, seized and fortified Shobury at the mouth of the Thames; and having left a garrison there, they marched along the river, till they came to Bodington in the county of Gloucester; where, being reinforced by some Welsh, they threw up entrenchments, and prepared for their defence. The king here surrounded them with the whole force of his dominions ⁶²; and as he had now a certain prospect of victory, he resolved to trust nothing to chance, but rather to master his enemies by famine than assault. They were reduced to such extremities, that, having eaten their own horses, and having many of them perished with hunger⁶³, they made a desperate sally upon the English;

⁶⁰ Chron. Sax. p. 94. M. West. p. 178.

⁶¹ M. West. p. 179.

⁶² Chron. Sax. p. 94.

⁶³ Ibid. M. West. p. 179. Flor. Wigorn. p. 596.

C H A P. II. and though the greater number fell in the action, a considerable body made their escape⁶⁴. These roved about for some time in England, still pursued by the vigilance of Alfred; they attacked Leicester with success, defended themselves in Hartford, and then fled to Quatford, where they were finally broken and subdued. The small remains of them either dispersed themselves among their countrymen in Northumberland and East-Anglia⁶⁵, or had recourse again to the sea, where they exercised piracy, under the command of Sigefert, a Northumbrian. This free-booter, well acquainted with Alfred's naval preparations, had framed vessels of a new construction, higher, and longer, and swifter, than those of the English: But the king soon discovered his superior skill, by building vessels still higher, and longer, and swifter, than those of the Northumbrians; and falling upon them, while they were exercising their ravages in the west, he took twenty of their ships; and having tried all the prisoners at Winchester, he hanged them as pirates, the common enemies of mankind.

THE well-timed severity of this execution, together with the excellent posture of defence established every where, restored full tranquillity in England, and provided for the future security of the government. The East-Anglian and Northumbrian Danes, on the first appearance of Alfred

⁶⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 95.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 97.

upon their frontiers, made anew the most humble submissions to him; and he thought it prudent to take them under his immediate government, without establishing over them a viceroy of their own nation⁶⁶. The Welsh also acknowledged his authority; and this great prince had now, by prudence and justice and valour, established his sovereignty over all the southern parts of the island, from the English channel to the frontiers of Scotland; when he died, in the vigour of his age and the full strength of his faculties, after a glorious reign of twenty-nine years and a half⁶⁷; in which he deservedly attained the appellation of Alfred the Great, and the title of Founder of the English monarchy.

901:

THE merit of this prince, both in private and public life, may with advantage be set in opposition to that of any monarch or citizen, which the annals of any age or any nation can present to us. He seems indeed to be the model of that perfect character, which, under the denomination of a sage or wise man, philosophers have been fond of delineating, rather as a fiction of their imagination, than in hopes of ever seeing it really existing: So happily were all his virtues tempered together; so justly were they blended; and so powerfully did each prevent the other from exceeding its proper boundaries! He knew how to reconcile the most enterprizing spirit with the

⁶⁶ Flor. Wigorn. p. 598.

⁶⁷ Affer. p. 21. Chron. Sax. p. 99.

C H A P.
II.

coolest moderation; the most obstinate perseverance with the easiest flexibility; the most severe justice with the gentlest lenity; the greatest vigour in commanding with the most perfect affability of deportment⁶⁸; the highest capacity and inclination for science, with the most shining talents for action. His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration; excepting only, that the former, being more rare among princes, as well as more useful, seem chiefly to challenge our applause. Nature also, as if desirous that so bright a production of her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him every bodily accomplishment, vigour of limbs, dignity of shape and air, with a pleasing, engaging, and open countenance⁶⁹. Fortune alone, by throwing him into that barbarous age, deprived him of historians worthy to transmit his fame to posterity; and we wish to see him delineated in more lively colours, and with more particular strokes, that we may at least perceive some of those small specks and blemishes, from which, as a man, it is impossible he could be entirely exempted.

BUT we should give but an imperfect idea of Alfred's merit, were we to confine our narration to his military exploits, and were not more particular in our account of his institutions for the execution of justice, and of his zeal for the encouragement of arts and sciences.

⁶⁸ After p. 13.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 5.

AFTER Alfred had subdued and had settled or C H A P.
expelled the Danes, he found the kingdom in the II.
most wretched condition; desolated by the ravages
of those barbarians, and thrown into disorders,
which were calculated to perpetuate its misery.
Though the great armies of the Danes were
broken, the country was full of straggling troops
of that nation, who, being accustomed to live
by plunder, were become incapable of industry,
and who, from the natural ferocity of their
manners, indulged themselves in committing
violence, even beyond what was requisite to
supply their necessities. The English themselves,
reduced to the most extreme indigence by these
continued depredations, had shaken off all bands
of government; and those who had been plun-
dered to-day, betook themselves next day to a
like disorderly life, and from despair joined the
robbers in pillaging and ruining their fellow-citi-
zens. These were the evils, for which it was
necessary that the vigilance and activity of Alfred
should provide a remedy.

THAT he might render the execution of justice
strict and regular, he divided all England into
counties; these counties he subdivided into
hundreds; and the hundreds into tythings. Every
house-holder was answerable for the behaviour of
his family and slaves, and even of his guests, if
they lived above three days in his house. Ten
neighbouring house-holders were formed into one
corporation, who, under the name of a tything,
decennary, or fribourg, were answerable for each
other's conduct, and over whom one person,

C H A P. 11. called a tythingman, headbourg, or borsholder, was appointed to preside. Every man was punished as an outlaw, who did not register himself in some tything. And no man could change his habitation, without a warrant or certificate from the borsholder of the tything, to which he formerly belonged.

WHEN any person in any tything or decennary was guilty of a crime, the borsholder was summoned to answer for him; and if he was not willing to be surety for his appearance and his clearing himself, the criminal was committed to prison, and there detained till his trial. If he fled, either before or after finding sureties, the borsholder and decennary became liable to enquiry, and were exposed to the penalties of law. Thirty-one days were allowed them for producing the criminal; and if that time elapsed without their being able to find him, the borsholder, with two other members of the decennary, was obliged to appear, and together with three chief members of the three neighbouring decennaries (making twelve in all) to swear that his decennary was free from all privy both of the crime committed, and of the escape of the criminal. If the borsholder could not find such a number to answer for their innocence, the decennary was compelled by fine to make satisfaction to the king, according to the degree of the offence⁷⁰. By this institution every man was obliged from his own interest to

⁷⁰ Leges St. Edw. cap. 20. apud. Wilkins, p. 202.

keep a watchful eye over the conduct of his C H A P.
neighbours; and was in a manner surety for the II.
behaviour of those who were placed under the
division, to which he belonged: Whence these
decennaries received the name of frankpledges.

SUCH a regular distribution of the people, with
such a strict confinement in their habitation, may
not be necessary in times, when men are more
enured to obedience and justice; and it might
perhaps be regarded as destructive of liberty and
commerce in a polished state; but it was well
calculated to reduce that fierce and licentious
people under the salutary restraint of law and
government. But Alfred took care to temper
these rigours by other institutions favourable to
the freedom of the citizens; and nothing could
be more popular and liberal than his plan for
the administration of justice. The borsholder
summoned together his whole decennary, to assist
him in deciding any lesser difference, which
occurred among the members of this small com-
munity. In affairs of greater moment, in appeals
from the decennary, or in controversies arising
between members of different decennaries, the
cause was brought before the hundred, which
consisted of ten decennaries, or a hundred families
of freemen, and which was regularly assembled
once in four weeks, for the deciding of causes ⁷¹.

⁷¹ Leg. Edw. cap. 2.

C H A P. Their method of decision deserves to be noted,
 II. as being the origin of juries; an institution, admirable in itself, and the best calculated for the preservation of liberty and the administration of justice, that ever was devised by the wit of man. Twelve freeholders were chosen; who, having sworn, together with the hundreder or presiding magistrate of that division, to administer impartial justice ⁷², proceeded to the examination of that cause, which was submitted to their jurisdiction. And beside these monthly meetings of the hundred, there was an annual meeting, appointed for a more general inspection of the police of the district; for the enquiry into crimes, the correction of abuses in magistrates, and the obliging of every person to shew the decennary in which he was registered. The people, in imitation of their ancestors, the ancient Germans, assembled there in arms; whence a hundred was sometimes called a wapentake, and its court served both for the support of military discipline, and for the administration of civil justice ⁷³.

THE next superior court to that of the hundred was the county-court, which met twice a year, after Michaelmas and Easter, and consisted of the freeholders of the county who possessed an equal vote in the decision of causes. The bishop presided

⁷² *Fœdus Alfred, and Gothurn, apud Wilkins, cap. 3. p. 47. Leg. Ethelstani, cap. 2. apud Wilkins, p. 58. LL. Ethelr. § 4. Wilkins, p. 117.*

⁷³ *Spellman in voce Wapentake.*

in this court, together with the alderman; and the proper object of the court was the receiving of appeals from the hundreds and decennaries, and the deciding of such controversies as arose between men of different hundreds. Formerly, the alderman possessed both the civil and military authority; but Alfred, sensible that this conjunction of powers rendered the nobility dangerous and independent, appointed also a sheriff in each county; who enjoyed a co-ordinate authority with the former in the judicial function⁷⁴. His office also empowered him to guard the rights of the crown in the county, and to levy the fines imposed; which in that age formed no contemptible part of the public revenue.

THERE lay an appeal, in default of justice, from all these courts to the king himself in council; and as the people, sensible of the equity and great talents of Alfred placed their chief confidence in him, he was soon overwhelmed with appeals from all parts of England. He was indefatigable in the dispatch of these causes⁷⁵; but finding that his time must be entirely engrossed by this branch of duty, he resolved to obviate the inconvenience, by correcting the ignorance or corruption of the inferior magistrates, from which it arose⁷⁶. He took care to have his nobility instructed

⁷⁴ Ingulf. p. 870.

⁷⁵ Affer. p. 20.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 18. 21. Flor Wigorn. p. 594. Abbas Reval. p. 355.

C H A P. II. in letters and the laws ⁷⁷: He chose the earls and sheriffs from among the men most celebrated for probity and knowledge: He punished severely all malversation in office ⁷⁸: And he removed all the earls, whom he found unequal to the trust ⁷⁹; allowing only some of the more elderly to serve by a deputy, till their death should make room for more worthy successors.

THE better to guide the magistrates in the administration of justice, Alfred framed a body of laws; which, though now lost, served long as the basis of English jurisprudence, and is generally deemed the origin of what is denominated the COMMON LAW. He appointed regular meetings of the states of England twice a year in London ⁸⁰; a city which he himself had repaired and beautified, and which he thus rendered the capital of the kingdom. The similarity of these institutions to the customs of the ancient Germans, to the practice of the other northern conquerors, and to the Saxon laws during the Heptarchy, prevents us from regarding Alfred as the sole author of this plan of government; and leads us rather to think, that, like a wise man, he contented himself with reforming, extending, and executing the institutions, which he found previously established. But on the whole, such success

⁷⁷ Flor. Wigorn. p. 594. Brompton, p. 814.

⁷⁸ Le Miroir de Justice. chap. 2.

⁷⁹ Affer d. 20.

⁸⁰ Le Miroir de Justice.

attended his legislation, that every thing bore suddenly a new face in England: Robberies and iniquities of all kinds were repressed by the punishment or reformation of the criminals⁸¹: And so exact was the general police, that Alfred, it is said, hung up, by way of bravado, golden bracelets near the highways; and no man dared to touch them⁸². Yet amidst these rigours of justice, this great prince preserved the most sacred regard to the liberty of his people; and it is a memorable sentiment preserved in his will, that it was just the English should for ever remain as free as their own thoughts⁸³.

As good morals and knowledge are almost inseparable, in every age, though not in every individual; the care of Alfred for the encouragement of learning among his subjects was another useful branch of his legislation, and tended to reclaim the English from their former dissolute and ferocious manners: But the King was guided in this pursuit, less by political views, than by his natural bent and propensity towards letters. When he came to the throne, he found the nation sunk into the grossest ignorance and barbarism, proceeding from the continued disorders in the government, and from the ravages of the Danes: The monasteries were destroyed,

⁸¹ Ingulf, p. 27.

⁸² W. Malmes. lib. 2. cap. 4.

⁸³ Affer. p. 24.

C H A P. II. the monks butchered or dispersed, their libraries burnt; and thus the only seats of erudition in those ages were totally subverted. Alfred himself complains, that on his accession he knew not one person, south of the Thames, who could so much as interpret the Latin service; and very few in the northern parts, who had reached even that pitch of erudition. But this prince invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe; he established schools every where for the instruction of his people; he founded, at least repaired the university of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges, revenues and immunities; he enjoined by law all freeholders possessed of two hides⁸⁴ of land or more to send their children to school for their instruction; he gave preferment both in church and state to such only as had made some proficiency in knowledge: And by all these expedients he had the satisfaction, before his death, to see a great change in the face of affairs; and in a work of his, which is still extant, he congratulates himself on the progress which learning, under his patronage, had already made in England.

BUT the most effectual expedient, employed by Alfred, for the encouragement of learning, was his own example, and the constant assiduity,

⁸⁴ A hide contained land sufficient to employ one plough. See H. Hunt. lib. 6. in A. D. 1008. Annal. Waverl. in A. D. 1083. Gervase of Tilbury says it commonly contained about 100 acres.

with which, notwithstanding the multiplicity and urgency of his affairs, he employed himself in the pursuits of knowledge. He usually divided his time into three equal portions: One was employed in sleep, and the refection of his body by diet and exercise; another in the dispatch of business; a third in study and devotion: And that he might more exactly measure the hours, he made use of burning tapers of equal length, which he fixed in lanthorns⁸⁵; an expedient suited to that rude age, when the geometry of dialling and the mechanism of clocks and watches were totally unknown. And by such a regular distribution of his time, though he often laboured under great bodily infirmities⁸⁶, this martial hero, who fought in person fifty-six battles by sea and land⁸⁷, was able, during a life of no extraordinary length, to acquire more knowledge, and even to compose more books, than most studious men, though blest with the greatest leisure and application, have, in more fortunate ages, made the object of their uninterrupted industry.

SENSIBLE, that the people, at all times, especially when their understandings are obstructed by ignorance and bad education, are not much susceptible of speculative instruction, Alfred endeavoured to convey his morality by apologues, parables, stories, apophthegms, couched in

⁸⁵ Affer. p. 20. W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 4. Ingulf. p. 870.

⁸⁶ Affer. p. 4. 12, 13, 17.

⁸⁷ W. Malm. lib. 4. cap. 4.

C H A P. II. poetry ; and besides propagating among his subjects , former compositions of that kind , which he found in the Saxon tongue⁸⁸, he exercised his genius in inventing works of a like nature⁸⁹, as well as in translating from the Greek the elegant fables of Æsop. He also gave Saxon translations of Orosius's and Bede's histories; and of Boethius concerning the consolation of philosophy⁹⁰. And he deemed it nowise derogatory from his other great characters of sovereign , legislator , warrior , and politician, thus to lead the way to his people in the pursuits of literature.

MEANWHILE, this prince was not negligent in encouraging the vulgar and mechanical arts, which have a more sensible , though not a closer connexion with the interests of society. He invited , from all quarters, industrious foreigners to re-people his country, which had been desolated by the ravages of the Danes⁹¹. He introduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds ; and no inventor or improver of any ingenious art did he suffer to go unrewarded⁹². He prompted men of activity to betake themselves to navigation, to push commerce into the most remote countries, and to acquire riches by

⁸⁸ Affer. p. 13.

⁸⁹ Spellman, p. 124. Abbas. Rieval. p. 355.

⁹⁰ W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 4. Brompton, p. 814.

⁹¹ Affer. p. 13. Flor. Wigorn. p. 588.

⁹² Affer. p. 20.

propagating industry among their fellow-citizens. C H A P.
 He set apart a seventh portion of his own revenue II.
 for maintaining a number of workmen, whom
 he constantly employed in rebuilding the ruined
 cities, castles, palaces, and monasteries⁹³. Even
 the elegancies of life were brought to him from
 the Mediterranean and the Indies⁹⁴; and his
 subjects, by seeing those productions of the peace
 ful arts, were taught to respect the virtues of
 justice and industry, from which alone they could
 arise. Both living and dead, Alfred was regarded,
 by foreigners, no less than by his own subjects
 as the greatest prince after Charlemagne that had
 appeared in Europe during several ages, and as
 one of the wisest and best that had ever adorned
 the annals of any nation.

ALFRED had, by his wife, Ethelfwitha,
 daughter of a Mercian earl, three sons and
 three daughters. The eldest son, Edmund, died
 without issue, in his father's lifetime. The third,
 Ethelfward, inherited his father's passion for
 letters, and lived a private life. The second,
 Edward, succeeded to his power; and passes
 by the appellation of Edward the Elder, being
 the first of that name who sat on the English
 throne.

EDWARD the Elder.

THIS prince, who equalled his father in mili- 201.
 tary talents, though inferior to him in knowledge

⁹³ Asser, p. 20. W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 4.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

C H A P. II. and erudition⁹⁵, found immediately, on his accession, a specimen of that turbulent life, to which all princes, and even all individuals were exposed, in an age when men, less restrained by law or justice, and less occupied by industry, had no aliment for their inquietude, but wars, insurrections, convulsions, rapine, and depredation. Ethelwald, his cousin-german, son of king Ethelbert, the elder brother of Alfred, insisted on his preferable title⁹⁶; and arming his partizans, took possession of Winburne, where he seemed determined to defend himself to the last extremity, and to await the issue of his pretensions⁹⁷. But when the king approached the town with a great army, Ethelwald, having the prospect of certain destruction, made his escape, and fled first into Normandy, and thence into Northumberland; where he hoped, that the people, who had been recently subdued by Alfred, and who were impatient of peace, would, on the intelligence of that great prince's death, seize the first pretence or opportunity of rebellion. The event did not disappoint his expectations: The Northumbrians declared for him⁹⁸; and Ethelwald, having thus connected his interest with the Danish tribes, went beyond sea, and collecting a body of these free-booters, he excited the hopes of all those

⁹⁵ W. Malmf. lib. 2. cap. 5. Hoveden, p. 421.

⁹⁶ Chron. Sax. p. 99, 100.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 100. H. Hunting. lib. 5. p. 352.

⁹⁸ Ibid. Ibid.

who had been accustomed to subsist by rapine and violence⁹⁹. The East-Anglian Danes joined his party: The Five-burgers, who were seated in the heart of Mercia, began to put themselves in motion; and the English found that they were again menaced with those convulsions, from which the valour and policy of Alfred had so lately rescued them. The rebels, headed by Ethelwald, made an incursion into the counties of Gloucester, Oxford, and Wilts; and having exercised their ravages in these places, they retired with their booty; before the king, who had assembled an army, was able to approach them. Edward, however, who was determined that his preparations should not be fruitless, conducted his forces into East-Anglia, and retaliated the injuries which the inhabitants had committed, by spreading the like devastation among them. Satiated with revenge, and loaded with booty, he gave orders to retire: But the authority of those ancient kings, which was feeble in peace, was not much better established in the field; and the Kentish men, greedy of more spoil, ventured, contrary to repeated orders, to stay behind him, and to take up their quarters in Bury. This disobedience proved in the issue fortunate to Edward. The Danes assaulted the Kentish men; but met with so vigorous a resistance, that, though they gained the field of battle,

C H A P.
II.

⁹⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 100. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo p. 24.

CHAP. II. they bought that advantage by the loss of their bravest leaders, and among the rest, by that of Ethelwald, who perished in the action¹⁰⁰. The king, freed from the fear of so dangerous a competitor, made peace on advantageous terms with the East-Angles¹⁰¹.

IN order to restore England to such a state of tranquillity as it was then capable of attaining, naught was wanting but the subjection of the Northumbrians, who, assisted by the scattered Danes in Mercia, continually infested the bowels of the kingdom. Edward, in order to divert the force of these enemies, prepared a fleet to attack them by sea; hoping, that, when his ships appeared on their coast, they must at least remain at home, and provide for their defence. But the Northumbrians were less anxious to secure their own property than greedy to commit spoil on their enemy; and concluding, that the chief strength of the English was embarked on board the fleet, they thought the opportunity favourable, and entered Edward's territories with all their forces. The king, who was prepared against this event, attacked them on their return at Tetenhall in the county of Stafford, put them to rout, recovered all the booty, and pursued them with great slaughter into their own country.

ALL the rest of Edward's reign was a scene of continued and successful action against the

¹⁰⁰ Chron. Sax. p. 101. Brompton, p. 832.

¹⁰¹ Chron. Sax. p. 102. Brompton, p. 832. Matth. West. p. 181.

Northumbrians, the East-Angles, the Five-C H A P.
 burgers, and the foreign Danes, who invadedII.
 him from Normandy and Brittany. Nor was he
 less provident in putting his kingdom in a posture
 of defence, than vigorous in assaulting the enemy.
 He fortified the towns of Chester, Eddesbury,
 Warwic, Cherbury, Buckingham, Towcester,
 Maldon, Huntingdon, and Colchester. He fought
 two signal battles, at Temsford and Maldon¹⁰².
 He vanquished Thurketill, a great Danish chief,
 and obliged him to retire with his followers into
 France, in quest of spoil and adventures. He
 subdued the East-Angles, and forced them to
 swear allegiance to him: He expelled the two
 rival princes of Northumberland, Reginald and
 Sidroc, and acquired, for the present, the dominion
 of that province: Several tribes of the Britons
 were subjected by him; and even the Scots, who,
 during the reign of Egbert, had, under the
 conduct of Kenneth, their king, increased their
 power, by the final subjection of the Picts; were
 nevertheless obliged to give him marks of sub-
 mission¹⁰³. In all these fortunate atchievements
 he was assisted by the activity and prudence of
 his sister Ethelfleda, who was widow of Ethel-
 bert, earl of Mercia, and who, after her husband's
 death, retained the government of that province.
 This princess, who had been reduced to extremity

¹⁰² Chron. Sax. p. 108. Flor. Wigorn. p. 601.

¹⁰³ Chron. Sax. p. 110. Hoveden, p. 421.

II. **H A P.** in child-bed, refused afterwards all commerce with her husband; not from any weak superstition, as was common in that age, but because she deemed all domestic occupations unworthy of her masculine and ambitious spirit ¹⁰⁴. She died before her brother; and Edward, during the remainder of his reign, took upon himself the immediate government of Mercia, which before had been entrusted to the authority of a governor ¹⁰⁵. The Saxon Chronicle fixes the death of this prince in 925 ¹⁰⁶: His kingdom devolved to Athelstan, his natural son.

A T H E L S T A N.

929. **T**HE stain in this prince's birth was not, in those times, deemed so considerable as to exclude him from the throne; and Athelstan, being of an age, as well as of a capacity, fitted for government, obtained the preference to Edward's younger children, who, though legitimate, were of too tender years to rule a nation so much exposed both to foreign invasion and to domestic convulsions. Some discontents, however, prevailed on his accession; and Alfred, a nobleman of considerable power, was thence encouraged to enter into a conspiracy against him. This incident

¹⁰⁴ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 5. Matth. West. p. 182. Ingulf, p. 28. Higden, p. 261.

¹⁰⁵ Chron. Sax. p. 110. Brompton, p. 831.

¹⁰⁶ Page 110.

is related by historians with circumstances, which the reader, according to the degree of credit he is disposed to give them, may impute either to the invention of monks, who forged them, or to their artifice, who found means of making them real. Alfred, it is said, being seized upon strong suspicions, but without any certain proof, firmly denied the conspiracy imputed to him; and in order to justify himself, he offered to swear to his innocence before the pope, whose person, it was supposed, contained such superior sanctity, that no one could presume to give a false oath in his presence, and yet hope to escape the immediate vengeance of heaven. The king accepted of the condition, and Alfred was conducted to Rome; where, either conscious of his innocence, or neglecting the superstition, to which he appealed, he ventured to make the oath required of him, before John, who then filled the papal chair. But no sooner had he pronounced the fatal words, than he fell into convulsions, of which, three days after, he expired. The king, as if the guilt of the conspirator was now fully ascertained, confiscated his estate, and made a present of it to the monastery of Malmesbury¹⁰⁷; secure that no doubts would ever thenceforth be entertained concerning the justice of his proceedings.

THE dominion of Athelstan was no sooner established over his English subjects, than he

¹⁰⁷ W. Malmes. lib. 2. cap. 6. Spell. Conc. p. 407.

C H A P. endeavoured to give security to the government;
II. by providing against the insurrections of the Danes, which had created so much disturbance to his predecessors. He marched into Northumberland; and finding, that the inhabitants bore with impatience the English yoke, he thought it prudent to confer on Sithric, a Danish nobleman, the title of King, and to attach him to his interests, by giving him his sister, Editha in marriage. But this policy proved by accident the source of dangerous consequences. Sithric died in a twelve-month after; and his two sons by a former marriage, Anlaf and Godfrid, founding pretensions on their father's elevation, assumed the sovereignty, without waiting for Athelstan's consent. They were soon expelled by the power of that monarch; and the former took shelter in Ireland, as the latter did in Scotland; where he received, during some time, protection from Constantine, who then enjoyed the crown of that kingdom. The Scottish prince, however, continually solicited, and even menaced, by Athelstan, at last promised to deliver up his guest; but secretly detesting this treachery, he gave Godfrid warning to make his escape¹⁰⁸; and that fugitive, after subsisting by piracy for some years, freed the king, by his death, from any farther anxiety. Athelstan, resenting Constantine's behaviour, entered Scotland with an army; and ravaging the country with

¹⁰⁸ W. Malmes. lib. 2. cap. 6.

impunity¹⁰⁹, he reduced the Scots to such distress, that their king was content to preserve his crown, by making submissions to the enemy. The English historians assert¹¹⁰, that Constantine did homage to Athelstan for his kingdom; and they add, that the latter prince, being urged by his courtiers to push the present favourable opportunity, and entirely subdue Scotland, replied, that it was more glorious to confer than conquer kingdoms¹¹¹. But those annals, so uncertain and imperfect in themselves, lose all credit, when national prepossessions and animosities have place: And on that account, the Scotch historians, who, without having any more knowledge of the matter, strenuously deny the fact, seem more worthy of belief.

CONSTANTINE, whether he owed the retaining of his crown to the moderation of Athelstan, who was unwilling to employ all his advantages against him, or to the policy of that prince, who esteemed the humiliation of an enemy a greater acquisition than the subjection of a discontented and mutinous people, thought the behaviour of the English monarch more an object of resentment than of gratitude. He entered into a confederacy with Anlaf, who had collected a great body of Danish pirates, whom he found hovering in the Irish

¹⁰⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 111. Hoveden, p. 422. H. Hunting. lib. 5. p. 354.

¹¹⁰ Hoveden, p. 422.

¹¹¹ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 6. Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 212.

CHAP.

II.

seas ; and with some Welsh princes , who were terrified at the growing power of Athelstan : And all these allies made by concert an irruption with a great army into England. Athelstan , collecting his forces , met the enemy near Brunsbury in Northumberland , and defeated them in a general engagement. This victory was chiefly ascribed to the valour of Turketul , the English chancellor : For in those turbulent ages , no one was so much occupied in civil employments , as wholly to lay aside the military character ¹¹².

THERE is a circumstance , not unworthy of notice , which historians relate with regard to the transactions of this war. Anlaf , on the approach of the English army , thought , that he could not venture too much to ensure a fortunate event ; and employing the artifice formerly practised by Alfred against the Danes , he entered the enemy's camp in the habit of a minstrel. The stratagem was for the present attended with like success. He gave such satisfaction to the soldiers , who flocked about him , that they introduced him to the king's tent ; and Anlaf , having played before that prince and his nobles during their repast , was dismissed with a handsome reward. His prudence kept him from refusing the present ; but his pride determined him , on his departure , to bury it , while he fancied that he was unespied

¹¹² The office of chancellor among the Anglo-Saxons resembled more that of a secretary of state , than that of our present chancellor. See Spellman in voce *Cancelarius*.

by all the world. But a foldier in Athelstan's camp, who had formerly served under Anlaf, had been struck with some suspicion on the first appearance of the minstrel; and was engaged by curiosity to observe all his motions. He regarded this last action as a full proof of Anlaf's disguise; and he immediately carried the intelligence to Athelstan, who blamed him for not sooner giving him information, that he might have seized his enemy. But the foldier told him, that, as he had formerly sworn fealty to Anlaf, he could never have pardoned himself the treachery of betraying and ruining his ancient master; and that Athelstan himself, after such an instance of his criminal conduct, would have had equal reason to distrust his allegiance. Athelstan, having praised the generosity of the foldier's principles, reflected on the incident, which he foresaw might be attended with important consequences. He removed his station in the camp; and as a bishop arrived that evening with a reinforcement of troops, (for the ecclesiastics were then no less warlike than the civil magistrates) he occupied with his train that very place which had been left vacant by the king's removal. The precaution of Athelstan was found prudent: For no sooner had darkness fallen, than Anlaf broke into the camp, and hastening directly to the place where he had left the king's tent, put the bishop to death, before he had time to prepare for his defence¹¹³.

¹¹³ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 6. Higden, p. 263.

C H A P.

II.

THERE fell several Danish and Welsh princes in the action of Brunsbury ¹¹⁴; and Constantine and Anlaf made their escape with difficulty, leaving the greater part of their army on the field of battle. After this success, Athelstan enjoyed his crown in tranquillity; and he is regarded as one of the ablest and most active of those ancient princes. He passed a remarkable law, which was calculated for the encouragement of commerce, and which it required some liberality of mind, in that age, to have devised: That a merchant, who had made three long sea-voyages on his own account, should be admitted to the rank of a thane or gentleman. This prince died at Gloucester in the year 941 ¹¹⁵, after a reign of sixteen years; and was succeeded by Edmund, his legitimate brother.

E D M U N D.

941.

EDMUND, on his accession, met with disturbance from the restless Northumbrians, who lay in wait for every opportunity of breaking into rebellion. But marching suddenly with his forces into their country, he so overawed the rebels, that they endeavoured to appease him by the most humble submissions ¹¹⁶. In order to give him the surer pledge of their obedience, they

¹¹⁴ Brompton, p. 839. Ingulf. p. 29.

¹¹⁵ Chron. Sax. p. 114.

¹¹⁶ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 7. Brompton, p. 857.

offered to embrace Christianity; a religion which the English Danes had frequently professed, when reduced to difficulties, but which, for that very reason, they regarded as a badge of servitude, and shook off as soon as a favourable opportunity offered. Edmund, trusting little to their sincerity in this forced submission, used the precaution of removing the Five-burgers from the towns of Mercia, in which they had been allowed to settle; because it was always found, that they took advantage of every commotion, and introduced the rebellious or foreign Danes into the heart of the kingdom. He also conquered Cumberland from the Britons; and conferred that territory on Malcolm king of Scotland, on condition that he should do him homage for it, and protect the north from all future incursions of the Danes.

EDMUND was young when he came to the crown; yet was his reign short, as his death was violent. One day, as he was solemnizing a festival in the county of Gloucester, he remarked, that Leolf, a notorious robber, whom he had sentenced to banishment, had yet the boldness to enter the hall where he himself dined, and to sit at table with his attendants. Enraged at this insolence, he ordered him to leave the room; but on his refusing to obey, the king, whose temper, naturally choleric, was inflamed by this additional insult, leaped on him himself, and seized him by the hair: But the ruffian, pushed to extremity, drew his dagger, and gave Edmund a wound,

C H A P. of which he immediately expired. This event
 II. happened in the year 946, and in the sixth year
 of the king's reign. Edmund left male-issve,
 but so young, that they were incapable of go-
 vernaing the kingdom; and his brother, Edred,
 was promoted to the throne.

E D R E D.

946.

T H E reign of this prince, as those of his
 predeceffors, was disturbed by the rebellions and
 incurfions of the Northumbrian Danes, who,
 though frequently quelled, were never entirely
 fubdued, nor had ever paid a fincere allegiance
 to the crown of England. The fucceffion of a
 new king feemed to them a favourable opportunity
 for fhaking off the yoke; but on Edred's appear-
 ance with an army, they made him their wonted
 fubmiffions; and the king, having wafte'd the
 country with fire and fword, as a punifhment
 of their rebellion, obliged them to renew their
 oaths of allegiance; and he ftraight retired with
 his forces. The obedience of the Danes lafted
 no longer than the prefent terror. Provoked at
 the devaftations of Edred, and even reduced by
 neceffity to fubfift on plunder, they broke into
 a new rebellion, and were again fubdued: But
 the king, now inftructed by experience, took
 greater precautions againft their future revolt.
 He fixed Englifh garrifons in their moft con-
 fiderable towns; and placed over them an Englifh
 governor, who might watch all their motions,
 and

and suppress any insurrection on its first appearance. He obliged also Malcolm, king of Scotland, to renew his homage for the lands which he held in England. C H A P. II.

EDRED, though not unwarlike, nor unfit for active life, lay under the influence of the lowest superstition, and had blindly delivered over his conscience to the guidance of Dunstan, commonly called St. Dunstan, abbot of Glastenbury, whom he advanced to the highest offices, and who covered, under the appearance of sanctity, the most violent and most insolent ambition. Taking advantage of the implicit confidence reposed in him by the king, this churchman imported into England a new order of monks, who much changed the state of ecclesiastical affairs, and excited, on their first establishment, the most violent commotions.

FROM the introduction of Christianity among the Saxons, there had been monasteries in England; and these establishments had extremely multiplied, by the donations of the princes and nobles; whose superstition, derived from their ignorance and precarious life, and increased by remorse for the crimes into which they were so frequently betrayed, knew no other expedient for appeasing the Deity than a profuse liberality towards the ecclesiastics. But the monks had hitherto been a species of secular priests, who lived after the manner of the present canons or prebendaries, and were both intermingled, in some degree, with the world, and endeavoured to

C H A P. render themselves useful to it. They were
 II. employed in the education of youth ¹¹⁷: They had the disposal of their own time and industry: They were not subjected to the rigid rules of an order: They had made no vows of implicit obedience to their superiors ¹¹⁸: And they still retained the choice, without quitting the convent, either of a married or a single life ¹¹⁹. But a mistaken piety had produced in Italy a new species of monks, called Benedictines, who, carrying farther the plausible principles of mortification, secluded themselves entirely from the world, renounced all claim to liberty, and made a merit of the most inviolable chastity. These practices and principles, which superstition at first engendered, were greedily embraced and promoted by the policy of the court of Rome. The Roman pontiff, who was making every day great advances towards an absolute sovereignty over the ecclesiastics, perceived, that the celibacy of the clergy alone could break off entirely their connexion with the civil power, and depriving them of every other object of ambition, engage them to promote, with unceasing industry, the grandeur of their own order. He was sensible, that, so long as the monks were

¹¹⁷ Osberne in *Anglia Sacra*, tom. ii. p. 92.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 91.

¹¹⁹ See Wharton's notes to *Anglia Sacra*, tom. ii. p. 91. Gervase, p. 1645. Chron. Wint. MS. apud Spell. Conc. p. 434.

indulged in marriage, and were permitted to rear families, they never could be subjected to strict discipline; or reduced to that slavery under their superiors, which was requisite to procure to the mandates, issued from Rome, a ready and zealous obedience. Celibacy, therefore, began to be extolled, as the indispensable duty of priests; and the pope undertook to make all the clergy throughout the western world renounce at once the privilege of marriage: A fortunate policy, but at the same time an undertaking the most difficult of any, since he had the strongest propensities of human nature to encounter, and found, that the same connexions with the female sex, which generally encourage devotion, were here unfavourable to the success of his project. It is no wonder, therefore, that this master-stroke of art should have met with violent contradiction, and that the interests of the hierarchy, and the inclinations of the priests, being now placed in this singular opposition, should, notwithstanding the continued efforts of Rome, have retarded the execution of that bold scheme, during the course of near three centuries.

As the bishops and parochial clergy lived apart with their families, and were more connected with the world, the hopes of success with them were fainter, and the pretence for making them renounce marriage was much less plausible. But the pope, having cast his eye on the monks as the basis of his authority, was determined to reduce them under strict rules of obedience,

C H A P. II. to procure them the credit of sanctity by an appearance of the most rigid mortification, and to break off all their other ties which might interfere with his spiritual policy. Under pretence, therefore of reforming abuses, which were, in some degree, unavoidable in the ancient establishments, he had already spread over the southern countries of Europe the severe laws of monastic life, and began to form attempts towards a like innovation in England. The favourable opportunity offered itself (and it was greedily seized) arising from the weak superstition of Edred, and the violent impetuous character of Dunstan.

DUNSTAN was born of noble parents in the west of England; and being educated under his uncle, Aldhelm, then Archbishop of Canterbury, had betaken himself to the ecclesiastical life, and had acquired some character in the court of Edmund. He was, however, represented to that prince as a man of licentious manners¹²⁰; and finding his fortune blasted by these suspicions, his ardent ambition prompted him to repair his indiscretions by running into an opposite extreme. He secluded himself entirely from the world; he framed a cell so small that he could neither stand erect in it nor stretch out his limbs during his repose; and he here employed himself perpetually either in devotion or in manual labour¹²¹. It is probable, that his brain became gradually crazed by these solitary occupations, and that his head was

¹²⁰ Osberne, p. 95. Matth. West. p. 187.

¹²¹ Osberne, p. 96.

filled with chimeras, which, being believed by himself and his stupid votaries, procured him the general character of sanctity among the people. He fancied, that the devil, among the frequent visits, which he paid him, was one day more earnest than usual in his temptations; till Dunstan, provoked at his importunity, seized him by the nose with a pair of red hot pincers, as he put his head into the cell; and he held him there, till that malignant spirit made the whole neighbourhood resound with his bellowings. This notable exploit was seriously credited and extolled by the public; it is transmitted to posterity by one who considering the age in which he lived, may pass for a writer of some elegance¹²²; and it insured to Dunstan, a reputation, which no real piety, much less virtue, could, even in the most enlightened period, have ever procured him with the people.

SUPPORTED by the character obtained in his retreat, Dunstan appeared again in the world; and gained such an ascendant over Edred, who had succeeded to the crown, as made him, not only the director of that prince's conscience, but his counsellor in the most momentous affairs of government. He was placed at the head of the treasury¹²³, and being thus possessed both of power at court, and of credit with the populace, he was enabled to attempt with success the most arduous enterprizes. Finding, that his

¹²² Osberne, p. 97.

¹²³ Ibid. p. 102. Wallingford, p. 54r.

II. H A P. advancement had been owing to the opinion of his austerity, he professed himself a partizan of the rigid monastic rules; and after introducing that reformation into the convents of Glastenbury and Abingdon, he endeavoured to render it universal in the kingdom.

THE minds of men were already well prepared for this innovation. The praises of an inviolable chastity had been carried to the highest extravagance by some of the first preachers of Christianity among the Saxons: The pleasures of love had been represented as incompatible with Christian perfection: And a total abstinence from all commerce with the sex was deemed such a meritorious penance, as was sufficient to atone for the greatest enormities. The consequence seemed natural, that those at least who officiated at the altar should be clear of this pollution; and when the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was now creeping in¹²⁴, was once fully established, the reverence to the real body of Christ in the eucharist bestowed on this argument an additional force and influence. The monks knew how to avail themselves of all these popular topics, and to set off their own character to the best advantage. They affected the greatest austerity of life and manners: They indulged themselves in the highest strains of devotion: They inveighed bitterly against the vices and pretended luxury of the age: They were particularly vehement against the

¹²⁴ Spell. Conc. vol. i. p. 452.

diffolute lives of the secular clergy, their rivals: C H A P.
 Every instance of libertinism in any individual of II.
 that order was represented as a general corruption:
 And where other topics of defamation were want-
 ing, their marriage became a sure subject of
 invective, and their wives received the name of
concubine, or other more opprobrious appellation.
 The secular clergy, on the other hand, who
 were numerous, and rich, and possessed of the
 ecclesiastical dignities, defended themselves with
 vigour, and endeavoured to retaliate upon their
 adversaries. The people were thrown into agita-
 tion; and few instances occur of more violent
 dissensions, excited by the most material differences
 in religion; or rather by the most frivolous: Since
 it is a just remark, that the more affinity there is
 between theological parties, the greater commonly
 is their animosity.

THE progress of the monks, which was become
 considerable, was somewhat retarded by the death
 of Edred, their partizan, who expired after a
 reign of nine years¹²⁵. He left children; but as
 they were infants, his nephew, Edwy, son of
 Edmund, was placed on the throne.

E D W Y.

EDWY, at the time of his accession, was not 955.
 above sixteen or seventeen years of age, was
 possessed of the most amiable figure, and was

¹²⁵ Chron. Sax. p. 115.

C H A P. II. even endowed, according to authentic accounts, with the most promising virtues ¹²⁶. He would have been the favourite of his people, had he not unhappily, at the commencement of his reign, been engaged in a controversy with the monks, whose rage neither the graces of the body nor virtues of the mind could mitigate, and who have pursued his memory with the same unrelenting vengeance, which they exercised against his person and dignity during his short and unfortunate reign. There was a beautiful princess of the royal blood, called Elgiva, who had made impression on the tender heart of Edwy; and as he was of an age, when the force of the passions first begins to be felt, he had ventured, contrary to the advice of his gravest counsellors, and the remonstrances of the more dignified ecclesiastics ¹²⁷, to espouse her; though she was within the degrees of affinity prohibited by the canon-law ¹²⁸. As the austerity, affected by the monks, made them particularly violent on this occasion, Edwy entertained a strong prepossession against them; and seemed on that account determined not to second their project, of expelling the seculars from all the convents, and of possessing themselves of those rich establishments. War was therefore declared between the king and the monks; and

¹²⁶ H. Hunting. lib. 5. p. 356.

¹²⁷ W. Malmes. lib. 2. cap. 7.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

the former soon found reason to repent his provoking such dangerous enemies. On the day of his coronation, his nobility were assembled in a great hall, and were indulging themselves in that riot and disorder, which, from the example of their German ancestors, had become habitual to the English¹²⁹; when Edwy, attracted by softer pleasures, retired into the Queen's apartment, and in that privacy, gave reins to his fondness towards his wife, which was only moderately checked by the presence of her mother. Dunstan conjectured the reason of the king's retreat; and carrying along with him, Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, over whom he had gained an absolute ascendant, he burst into the apartment, upbraided Edwy with his lasciviousness, probably bestowed on the queen the most opprobrious epithet that can be applied to her sex, and tearing him from her arms, pushed him back, in a disgraceful manner, into the banquet of the nobles¹³⁰. Edwy, though young and opposed by the prejudices of the people, found an opportunity of taking revenge for this public insult. He questioned Dunstan concerning the administration of the treasury during the reign of his predecessor¹³¹; and when that minister refused to give any account of money, expended, as he affirmed, by

¹²⁹ Wallingford, p. 542.

¹³⁰ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 7. Osberne, p. 83. 105. M. West p. 195, 196.

¹³¹ Wallingford, p. 542. Alur. Beverl. p. 112.

CHAP. II. orders of the late king, he accused him of malversation in his office, and banished him the kingdom. But Dunstan's cabal was not unactive during his absence: They filled the public with high panegyrics on his sanctity: They exclaimed against the impiety of the king and queen: And having poisoned the minds of the people by these declamations, they proceeded to still more outrageous actes of violence against the royal authority. Archbishop Odo sent into the palace a party of soldiers, who seized the queen; and having burned her face with a red hot iron in order to destroy that fatal beauty, which had seduced Edwy, they carried her by force into Ireland, there to remain in perpetual exile¹³². Edwy, finding it vain to resist, was obliged to consent to his divorce, which was pronounced by Odo¹³³; and a catastrophe, still more dismal, awaited the unhappy Elgiva. That amiable princess, being cured of her wounds, and having even obliterated the scars, with which Odo had hoped to deface her beauty, returned into England, and was flying to the embraces of the king, whom she still regarded as her husband; when she fell into the hands of a party, whom the primate had sent to intercept her. Nothing but her death could now give security to Odo and the monks; and the most cruel death was requisite to satiate their vengeance. She was hamstringed;

¹³² Osberne, p. 84. Gervase, p. 1644.

¹³³ Hoveden, p. 425.

and expired a few days after at Gloucester in the most acute torments ¹³⁴. C H A P. II.

THE English, blinded with superstition, instead of being shocked with this inhumanity, exclaimed that the misfortunes of Edwy and his consort were a just judgment for their dissolute contempt of the ecclesiastical statutes. They even proceeded to rebellion against their sovereign; and having placed Edgar at their head, the younger brother of Edwy, a boy of thirteen years of age, they soon put him in possession of Mercia, Northumberland, East-Anglia; and chased Edwy into the southern counties. That it might not be doubtful at whose instigation this revolt was undertaken; Dunstan returned into England, and took upon him the government of Edgar and his party. He was first installed in the see of Worcester, then in that of London ¹³⁵, and, on Odo's death, and the violent expulsion of Brithelm, his successor, in that of Canterbury ¹³⁶; of all which he long kept possession. Odo is transmitted to us by the monks under the character of a man of piety: Dunstan was even canonized; and is one of those numerous saints of the same stamp who disgrace the Romish calendar. Meanwhile the unhappy Edwy was excommunicated ¹³⁷, and pursued

¹³⁴ Osberne, p. 84. Gervase, p. 1645, 1646.

¹³⁵ Chron Sax. p. 117. Flor. Wigorn. p. 605. Wallingford, p. 544.

¹³⁶ Hoveden, p. 425. Osberne, p. 109.

¹³⁷ Brompton, p. 863.

C H A P. with unrelenting vengeance; but his death, which
 II. happened soon after, freed his enemies from all farther inquietude, and gave Edgar peaceable possession of the government ¹³⁸.

E D G A R.

THIS prince, who mounted the throne in such early youth, soon discovered an excellent capacity in the administration of affairs; and his reign is one of the most fortunate that we meet with in the ancient English history. He showed no aversion to war; he made the wisest preparations against invaders: And by this vigour and foresight, he was enabled, without any danger of suffering insults, to indulge his inclination towards peace, and to employ himself in supporting and improving the internal government of his kingdom. He maintained a body of disciplined troops; which he quartered in the north, in order to keep the mutinous Northumbrians in subjection, and to repel the inroads of the Scots. He built and supported a powerful navy ¹³⁹; and that he might retain the seamen in the practice of their duty, and always present a formidable armament to his enemies, he stationed three squadrons off the coast, and ordered them to make, from time to time, the circuit of his dominions ¹⁴⁰. The foreign

¹³⁸ See note [B] at the end of the volume.

¹³⁹ Higden, p. 265.

¹⁴⁰ See note [C] at the end of the volume.

Danes dared not to approach a country which appeared in such a posture of defence: The domestic Danes saw inevitable destruction to be the consequence of their tumults and insurrections: The neighbouring sovereigns, the king of Scotland, the princes of Wales, of the Isle of Man, of the Orkneys, and even of Ireland¹⁴¹, were reduced to pay submission to so formidable a monarch. He carried his superiority to a great height, and might have excited an universal combination against him, had not his power been so well established, as to deprive his enemies of all hopes of shaking it. It is said, that, residing once at Chester, and having proposed to go by water to the abbey of St. John the Baptist, he obliged eight of his tributary princes to row him in a barge upon the Dee¹⁴². The English historians are fond of mentioning the name of Kenneth III. king of Scots among the number: The Scottish historians either deny the fact, or assert, that their king, if ever he acknowledged himself a vassal to Edgar, did him homage, not for his crown, but for the dominions which he held in England.

BUT the chief means, by which Edgar maintained his authority, and preserved public peace, was the paying of court to Dunstan and the monks, who had at first placed him on the throne, and who, by their pretensions to superior sanctity

¹⁴¹ Spell. Conc. p. 432.

¹⁴² W. Malmes. lib. 2. cap. 8. Hoveden, p. 406. H. Hunting. lib. 5. p. 356.

CHAP. II. and purity of manners, had acquired an ascendant over the people. He favoured their scheme for dispossessing the secular canons of all the monasteries ¹⁴³; he bestowed preferment on none but their partizans; he allowed Dunstan to resign the see of Worcester into the hands of Oswald, one of his creatures ¹⁴⁴, and to place Ethelwold, another of them, in that of Winchester ¹⁴⁵; he consulted these prelates in the administration of all ecclesiastical, and even in that of many civil affairs; and though the vigour of his own genius prevented him from being implicitly guided by them, the king and the bishops found such advantages in their mutual agreement, that they always acted in concert, and united their influence in preserving the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom.

IN order to compleat the great work of placing the new order of monks in all the convents, Edgar summoned a general council of the prelates and the heads of the religious orders. He here inveighed against the dissolute lives of the secular clergy; the smallness of their tonsure, which, it is probable, maintained no longer any resemblance to the crown of thorns; their negligence in attending the exercise of their function; their

¹⁴³ Chron. Sax. p. 117, 118. W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 8. Hoveden, p. 425, 426. Osberne, p. 112.

¹⁴⁴ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 8. Hoveden, p. 425.

¹⁴⁵ Gervase, p. 1646. Brompton, p. 864. Flor. Wigorn. p. 606. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 27, 28.

mixing with the laity in the pleasures of gaming, hunting, dancing, and singing; and their openly living with concubines, by which it is commonly supposed he meant their wives. He then turned himself to Dunstan the primate; and in the name of king Edred, whom he supposed to look down from heaven with indignation against all those enormities, he thus addressed him. “It is you, “Dunstan, by whose advice I founded monasteries, built churches, and expended my treasure in the support of religion and religious houses. You were my counsellor and assistant in all my schemes: You were the director of my conscience: To you I was obedient in all things. When did you call for supplies, which I refused you? Was my assistance ever wanting to the poor? Did I deny support and establishments to the clergy and the convents? Did I not hearken to your instructions, who told me, that these charities were, of all others, the most grateful to my Maker, and fixed a perpetual fund for the support of religion? And are all our pious endeavours now frustrated by the dissolute lives of the priests? Not that I throw any blame on you: You have reasoned, besought, inculcated, inveighed: But it now behoves you to use sharper and more vigorous remedies; and conjoining your spiritual authority with the civil power, to purge effectually the temple of God from thieves and intruders¹⁴⁶.”

¹⁴⁶ Abbas. Rieval. p. 360, 361. Spell. Conc. p. 476, 477, 478.

C H A P. II. It is easy to imagine, that this harangue had the desired effect; and that, when the king and prelates thus concurred with the popular prejudices, it was not long before the monks prevailed, and established their new discipline in almost all the convents.

WE may remark, that the declamations against the secular clergy are, both here and in all the historians, conveyed in general terms; and as *that* order of men are commonly restrained by the decency of their character, it is difficult to believe, that the complaints against their dissolute manners could be so universally just as is pretended. It is more probable, that the monks paid court to the populace by an affected austerity of life; and, representing the most innocent liberties, taken by the other clergy, as great and unpardonable enormities, thereby prepared the way for the increase of their own power and influence. Edgar, however, like a true politician, concurred with the prevailing party; and he even indulged them in pretensions, which, though they might, when complied with, engage the monks to support royal authority during his own reign, proved afterwards dangerous to his successors, and gave disturbance to the whole civil power. He seconded the policy of the court of Rome, in granting to some monasteries an exemption from episcopal jurisdiction: He allowed the convents, even those of royal foundation, to usurp the election of their own abbot: And he admitted their forgeries of ancient charters, by which, from the pretended

pretended grant of former kings, they assumed c H A P.
many privileges and immunities ¹⁴⁷. II.

THESE merits of Edgar have procured him the highest panegyrics from the monks; and he is transmitted to us not only under the character of a consummate statesman and an active prince, praises to which he seems to have been justly entitled, but under that of a great saint and a man of virtue. But nothing could more betray both his hypocrisy in inveighing against the licentiousness of the secular clergy, and the interested spirit of his partizans, in bestowing such eulogies on his piety, than the usual tenor of his conduct, which was licentious to the highest degree, and violated every law, human and divine. Yet those very monks, who, as we are told by Ingulf, a very ancient historian, had no idea of any moral or religious merit, except chastity and obedience, not only connived at his enormities, but loaded him with the greatest praises. History, however, has preserved some instances of his amours, from which, as from a specimen, we may form a conjecture of the rest.

EDGAR broke into a convent, carried off Editha, a nun, by force, and even committed violence on her person ¹⁴⁸. For this act of sacrilege he was reprimanded by Dunstan; and that he might

¹⁴⁷ Chron. Sax. p. 118. W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 8. Seldeni Spicileg. ad Eadm. p. 149. 157.

¹⁴⁸ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 8. Osberne, p. 3. Diceto, p. 457. Higden, p. 265. 267, 268. Spell. Conc. p. 481.

C H A P. II. reconcile himself to the church, he was obliged, not to separate from his mistress, but to abstain

from wearing his crown during seven years, and to deprive himself so long of that vain ornament¹⁴⁹: A punishment very unequal to that which had been inflicted on the unfortunate Edwy, who, for a marriage, which, in the strictest sense, could only deserve the name of irregular, was expelled his kingdom, saw his queen treated with singular barbarity, was loaded with calumnies, and has been represented to us under the most odious colours. Such is the ascendant which may be attained, by hypocrisy and cabal, over mankind.

THERE was another mistress of Edgar's, with whom he first formed a connexion by a kind of accident. Passing one day by Andover, he lodged in the house of a nobleman, whose daughter, being endowed with all the graces of person and behaviour, enflamed him at first sight with the highest desire; and he resolved by any expedient to gratify it. As he had not leisure to employ courtship or address for attaining his purpose, he went directly to her mother, declared the violence of his passion, and desired that the young lady might be allowed to pass that very night with him. The mother was a woman of virtue, and determined not to dishonour her daughter and her family by compliance; but being well acquainted with the impetuosity of the king's temper, she thought it would be easier, as well as safer, to

¹⁴⁹ Osberne, p. III.

deceive than refuse him. She feigned therefore a submission to his will; but secretly ordered a waiting-maid, of no disagreeable figure, to steal into the king's bed, after all the company should be retired to rest. In the morning, before day-break, the damsel, agreeably to the injunctions of her mistress, offered to retire; but Edgar, who had no reserve in his pleasures, and whose love to his bedfellow was rather enflamed by enjoyment, refused his consent, and employed force and entreaties to detain her. Elfreda (for that was the name of the maid) trusting to her own charms, and to the love with which, she hoped, she had now inspired the king, made probably but a faint resistance; and the return of light discovered the deceit to Edgar. He had passed a night so much to his satisfaction, that he expressed no displeasure with the old lady on account of her fraud; his love was transferred to Elfreda; she became his favourite mistress; and maintained her ascendant over him, till his marriage with Elfrida¹⁵⁰.

THE circumstances of his marriage with this lady were more singular, and more criminal. Elfrida was daughter and heir of Olgar, earl of Devonshire; and though she had been educated in the country, and had never appeared at court, she had filled all England with the reputation of her beauty. Edgar himself, who was indifferent to no accounts of this nature, found his curiosity

¹⁵⁰ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 8. Higden, p. 268.

C H A P.
II.

excited by the frequent panegyrics which he heard of Elfrida ; and reflecting on her noble birth , he resolved , if he found her charms answerable to their fame , to obtain possession of her on honourable terms. He communicated his intention to earl Athelwold , his favourite ; but used the precaution , before he made any advances to her parents , to order that nobleman , on some pretence , to pay them a visit , and to bring him a certain account of the beauty of their daughter. Athelwold , when introduced to the young lady , found general report to have fallen short of the truth ; and being actuated by the most vehement love , he determined to sacrifice to this new passion his fidelity to his master , and the trust reposed in him. He returned to Edgar , and told him , that the riches alone , and high quality of Elfrida , had been the ground of the admiration paid her , and that her charms , far from being any wise extraordinary , would have been overlooked in a woman of inferior station. When he had , by this deceit , diverted the king from his purpose , he took an opportunity , after some interval , of turning again the conversation on Elfrida : He remarked , that , though the parentage and fortune of the lady had not produced on him , as on others , any illusion with regard to her beauty , he could not forbear reflecting , that she would on the whole be an advantageous match for him , and might , by her birth and riches , make him sufficient compensation for the homeliness of her person. If the king , therefore , gave his appro-

bation, he was determined to make proposals in c H A P.
his own behalf to the earl of Devonshire, and II.
doubted not to obtain his, as well as the
young lady's, consent to the marriage. Edgar,
pleased with an expedient for establishing his
favourite's fortune, not only exhorted him to
execute his purpose, but forwarded his success by
his recommendations to the parents of Elfrida;
and Athelwold was soon made happy in the
possession of his mistress. Dreading, however,
the detection of the artifice, he employed every
pretence for detaining Elfrida in the country,
and for keeping her at a distance from Edgar.

THE violent passion of Athelwold had rendered
him blind to the necessary consequences, which
must attend his conduct, and the advantages,
which the numerous enemies, that always pursue
a royal favourite, would, by its means, be able
to take against him. Edgar was soon informed of
the truth; but before he would execute venge-
ance on Athelwold's treachery, he resolved to
satisfy himself with his own eyes of the certainty
and full extent of his guilt. He told him, that he
intended to pay him a visit in his castle, and be
introduced to the acquaintance of his new-married
wife; and Athelwold, as he could not refuse
the honour, only craved leave to go before him
a few hours, that he might the better prepare
every thing for his reception. He then discovered
the whole matter to Elfrida; and begged her,
if she had any regard, either to her own honour
or his life, to conceal from Edgar, by every

C H A P. II. circumstance of dress and behaviour, that fatal beauty, which had seduced him from fidelity to his friend, and had betrayed him into so many falsehoods. Elfrida promised compliance, though nothing was farther from her intentions. She deemed herself little beholden to Athelwold for a passion, which had deprived her of a crown; and knowing the force of her own charms, she did not despair even yet of reaching that dignity, of which her husband's artifice had bereaved her. She appeared before the king with all the advantages, which the richest attire, and the most engaging airs could bestow upon her, and she excited at once in his bosom the highest love toward herself, and the most furious desire of revenge against her husband. He knew, however, to dissemble these passions; and seducing Athelwold into a wood, on pretence of hunting, he stabbed him with his own hand, and soon after publickly espoused Elfrida ¹⁵¹.

BEFORE we conclude our account of this reign, we must mention two circumstances; which are remarked by historians. The reputation of Edgar allured a great number of foreigners to visit his court; and he gave them encouragement to reside in England ¹⁵². We are told, that they imported

¹⁵¹ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 8. Hoveden, p. 426. Brompton, p. 865, 866. Flor. Wigorn. p. 606. Higden, p. 268.

¹⁵² Chron. Sax. p. 116. H. Hunting. lib. 5. p. 356. Brompton, p. 865.

all the vices of their respective countries, and contributed to corrupt the simple manners of the natives ¹⁵³: But as this simplicity of manners, so highly and often so injudiciously extolled, did not preserve them from barbarity and treachery, the greatest of all vices, and the most incident to a rude uncultivated people, we ought perhaps to deem their acquaintance with foreigners rather an advantage; as it tended to enlarge their views, and to cure them of those illiberal prejudices and rustic manners, to which islanders are often subject.

ANOTHER remarkable incident of this reign was the extirpation of wolves from England. This advantage was attained by the industrious policy of Edgar. He took great pains in hunting and pursuing those ravenous animals; and when he found, that all that escaped him had taken shelter in the mountains and forests of Wales, he changed the tribute of money imposed on the Welsh princes by Athelstan, his predecessor ¹⁵⁴, into an annual tribute of three hundred heads of wolves; which produced such diligence in hunting them, that the animal has been no more seen in this island.

EDGAR died, after a reign of sixteen years, and in the thirty-third of his age. He was succeeded by Edward, whom he had by his first marriage with the daughter of earl Ordmer.

¹⁵³ W. Malmes. lib. 2. cap. 8.

¹⁵⁴ W. Malmes. lib. 2. cap. 6. Brompton, p. 838.

C H A P.

II.

E D W A R D the Martyr.

957.

THE succession of this prince, who was only fifteen years of age at his father's death, did not take place without much difficulty and opposition. Elfrida, his step-mother, had a son, Ethelred, seven years old, whom she attempted to raise to the throne: She affirmed, that Edgar's marriage with the mother of Edward was exposed to insuperable objections; and as she had possessed great credit with her husband, she had found means to acquire partizans, who seconded all her pretensions. But the title of Edward was supported by many advantages. He was appointed successor by the will of his father¹⁵⁵: He was approaching to man's estate, and might soon be able to take into his own hands the reins of government: The principal nobility, dreading the imperious temper of Elfrida, were averse to her son's government, which must enlarge her authority, and probably put her in possession of the regency: Above all, Dunstan, whose character of sanctity had given him the highest credit with the people, had espoused the cause of Edward, over whom he had already acquired a great ascendant¹⁵⁶; and he was determined to execute the will of Edgar in his favour. To cut off all opposite pretensions, Dunstan resolutely anointed and crowned the young prince at Kingston; and the whole

¹⁵⁵ Hoveden, 427. Eadmer, p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ Eadmer, ex edit. Seldeni. p. 3.

kingdom, without farther dispute, submitted C H A R.
to him ¹⁵⁷. II.

It was of great importance to Dunstan and the monks, to place on the throne a king favourable to their cause: The secular clergy had still partizans in England, who wished to support them in the possession of the convents, and of the ecclesiastical authority. On the first intelligence of Edgar's death, Allere, duke of Mercia, expelled the new orders of monks from all the monasteries which lay within his jurisdiction ¹⁵⁸; but Elfwin, duke of East-Anglia, and Brithnot, duke of the East-Saxons, protected them within their territories, and insisted upon the execution of the late laws enacted in their favour. In order to settle this controversy, there were summoned several synods, which, according to the practice of those times, consisted partly of ecclesiastical members, partly of the lay nobility. The monks were able to prevail in these assemblies; though, as it appears, contrary to the secret wishes, if not the declared inclination, of the leading men in the nation ¹⁵⁹. They had more invention in forging miracles to support their cause; or having been so fortunate as to obtain, by their pretended austerities, the character of piety, their miracles were more credited by the populace.

¹⁵⁷ W. Malm. lib. 2. cap. 9. Hoveden, p. 427. Osberne, p. 113.

¹⁵⁸ Chron. Sax. p. 123. W. Malmesf. lib. 2. cap. 9. Hoveden, p. 427. Brompton, p. 870. Flor. Wigorn. p. 607.

¹⁵⁹ W. Malmesf. lib. 2. cap. 9.

CHAP. II. IN one synod, Dunstan, finding the majority of votes against him, rose up, and informed the audience, that he had, that instant, received an immediate revelation in behalf of the monks: The assembly was so astonished at this intelligence, or probably so overawed by the populace, that they proceeded no farther in their deliberations. In another synod, a voice issued from the crucifix, and informed the members, that the establishment of the monks was founded on the will of heaven, and could not be opposed without impiety¹⁶⁰. But the miracle performed in the third synod was still more alarming: The floor of the hall in which the assembly met, sunk of a sudden, and a great number of the members were either bruised or killed by the fall. It was remarked, that Dunstan had that day prevented the king from attending the synod, and that the beam, on which his own chair stood, was the only one that did not sink under the weight of the assembly¹⁶¹: But these circumstances, instead of begetting any suspicion of contrivance, were regarded as the surest proof of the immediate interposition of providence, in behalf of those favourites of heaven.

¹⁶⁰ W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 9. Osberne, p. 112. Gervase, p. 1647. Brompton, p. 870. Higden, p. 269.

¹⁶¹ Chron. Sax. p. 124. W. Malmesb. lib. 2. cap. 9. Hoveden, p. 427. H. Hunting. lib. 5. p. 357. Gervase, p. 1647. Brompton, p. 870. Flor. Wigorn. p. 607. Higden, p. 269. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 29.

EDWARD lived four years after his accession, and there passed nothing memorable during his reign. His death alone was memorable and tragical¹⁶². This young prince was endowed with the most amiable innocence of manners; and as his own intentions were always pure, he was incapable of entertaining any suspicion against others. Though his stepmother had opposed his succession, and had raised a party in favour of her own son, he always showed her marks of regard, and even expressed, on all occasions, the most tender affection toward his brother. He was hunting one day in Dorsetshire; and being led by the chace near Corfe-castle, where Elfrida resided, he took the opportunity of paying her a visit, unattended by any of his retinue, and he thereby presented her with the opportunity, which she had long wished for. After he had mounted his horse, he desired some liquor to be brought him: While he was holding the cup to his head, a servant of Elfrida approached him, and gave him a stab behind. The prince, finding himself wounded, put spurs to his horse; but becoming faint by loss of blood, he fell from the saddle, his foot stuck in the stirrup, and he was dragged along by his unruly horse, till he expired. Being tracked by the blood, his body was found, and was privately interred at Wareham by his servants.

¹⁶² Chron. Sax. p. 124.

C H A P. II. THE youth and innocence of this prince, with his tragical death, begat such compaffion among the people, that they believed miracles to be wrought at his tomb; and they gave him the appellation of martyr, though his murder had no connexion with any religious principle or opinion. Elfrida built monasteries, and performed many penances, in order to atone for her guilt; but could never, by all her hypocrify or remorse, recover the good opinion of the public, though so easily deluded in those ignorant ages.

C H A P. III.

*Ethelred — Settlement of the Normans — Edmund
Ironside — Canute — Harold Harefoot — Hardi-
canute — Edward the Confessor — Harold.*

E T H E L R E D.

THE freedom, which England had so long enjoyed from the depredations of the Danes, seems to have proceeded, partly from the establishments, which that piratical nation had obtained in the north of France, and which employed all their superfluous hands to people and maintain them; partly from the vigour and warlike spirit of a long race of English princes, who preserved the kingdom in a posture of defence by sea and land, and either prevented or repelled every attempt of the invaders. But a new generation of men being now sprung up in the northern regions, who could no longer disburthen themselves on Normandy; the English had reason to dread, that the Danes would again visit an Island, to which they were invited, both by the memory of their past successes, and by the expectation of assistance from their countrymen, who, though long established in the kingdom, were not yet thoroughly incorporated with the natives, nor had entirely forgotten their

C H A P.

III.

9782

e H A P. inveterate habits of war and depredation. And
 III. as the reigning prince was a minor, and even
 when he attained to man's estate, never discovered
 either courage or capacity sufficient to govern
 his own subjects, much less to repel a formidable
 enemy, the people might justly apprehend the
 worst calamities from so dangerous a crisis.

THE Danes, before they durst attempt any
 important enterprize against England, made an
 inconsiderable descent by way of trial; and
 having landed from seven vessels near Southampton,
 they ravaged the country, enriched themselves
 by spoil, and departed with impunity. Six years
 after, they made a like attempt in the west, and
 met with like success. The invaders, having now
 found affairs in a very different situation from
 that in which they formerly appeared, encouraged
 their countrymen to assemble a greater force,
 and to hope for more considerable advantages.
 981. They landed in Essex under the command of
 two leaders; and having defeated and slain at
 Maldon, Brithnot, duke of that county, who
 ventured, with a small body, to attack them,
 they spread their devastations over all the neigh-
 bouring provinces. In this extremity, Ethelred,
 to whom historians give the epithet of the *Unready*,
 instead of rousing his people to defend with
 courage their honour and their property, hearken-
 ed to the advice of Siricius, archbishop of Can-
 terbury, which was seconded by many of the
 degenerate nobility; and paying the enemy the
 sum of ten thousand pounds, he bribed them to

depart the kingdom. This shameful expedient was attended with the success which might be expected. The Danes next year appeared off the eastern coast, in hopes of subduing a people, who defended themselves by their money, which invited assailants, instead of their arms, which repelled them. But the English, sensible of their folly, had, in the interval, assembled in a great council, and had determined to collect at London a fleet able of giving battle to the enemy¹; though that judicious measure failed of success, from the treachery of Alfric, duke of Mercia, whose name is infamous in the annals of that age, by the calamities which his repeated perfidy brought upon his country. This nobleman had, in 983, succeeded to his father, Alfere, in that extensive command; but being deprived of it two years after, and banished the kingdom, he was obliged to employ all his intrigue, and all his power, which was too great for a subject, to be restored to his country, and reinstated in his authority. Having had experience of the credit and malevolence of his enemies, he thenceforth trusted for security, not to his services or to the affections of his fellow-citizens, but to the influence which he had obtained over his vassals, and to the public calamities, which, he thought, must, in every revolution, render his assistance necessary. Having fixed this resolution, he determined to prevent all such successes as might

¹ Chron. Sax. p. 126.

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establish the royal authority, or render his own situation dependent or precarious. As the English had formed the plan of surrounding and destroying the Danish fleet in harbour, he privately informed the enemy of their danger; and when they put to sea, in consequence of this intelligence, he deserted to them, with the squadron under his command, the night before the engagement, and thereby disappointed all the efforts of his countrymen². Ethelred, enraged at his perfidy, seized his son, Alfgar, and ordered his eyes to be put out³. But such was the power of Alfric, that he again forced himself into authority; and though he had given this specimen of his character, and received this grievous provocation, it was found necessary to entrust him anew with the government of Mercia. This conduct of the court, which, in all its circumstances, is so barbarous, weak, and imprudent, both merited and prognosticated the most grievous calamities.

993.

THE northern invaders, now well acquainted with the defenceless condition of England, made a powerful descent under the command of Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olave, king of Norway; and sailing up the Humber, spread on all sides their destructive ravages. Lindsey was laid waste; Banbury was destroyed; and all the Northumbrians, though mostly of Danish descent, were constrained either to join the invaders, or

² Chron. Sax. p. 127. W. Malm. p. 62. Higden, p. 270.

³ Chron. Sax. p. 128. W. Malm. p. 62.

to suffer under their depredations. A powerful army was assembled to oppose the Danes, and a general action ensued; but the English were deserted in the battle, from the cowardice or treachery of their three leaders, all of them men of Danish race, Frena, Frithegift, and Godwin, who gave the example of a shameful flight to the troops under their command.

ENCOURAGED by this success, and still more by the contempt which it inspired for their enemy, the pirates ventured to attack the center of the kingdom; and entering the Thames in ninety-four vessels, laid siege to London, and threatened it with total destruction. But the citizens, alarmed at the danger, and firmly united among themselves, made a bolder defence than the cowardice of the nobility and gentry gave the invaders reason to apprehend; and the besiegers, after suffering the greatest hardships, were finally frustrated in their attempt. In order to revenge themselves, they laid waste Essex, Sussex, and Hampshire; and having there procured horses, they were thereby enabled to spread, through the more inland counties, the fury of their depredations. In this extremity, Ethelred and his nobles had recourse to the former expedient; and sending ambassadors to the two northern kings, they promised them subsistence and tribute, on condition they would, for the present, put an end to their ravages, and soon after depart the kingdom. Sweyn and Olave agreed to the terms, and peaceably took up their quarters at Southampton.

C H A P. where the sum of sixteen thousand pounds was
 III. paid to them. Olave even made a journey to Andover, where Ethelred resided; and he received the rite of confirmation from the English bishops, as well as many rich presents from the king. He here promised, that he would never more infest the English territories; and he faithfully fulfilled the engagement. This prince receives the appellation of St. Olave from the church of Rome; and notwithstanding the general presumption, which lies, either against the understanding or morals of every one, who in those ignorant ages was dignified with that title, he seems to have been a man of merit and of virtue. Sweyn, though less scrupulous than Olave, was constrained, upon the departure of the Norwegian prince, to evacuate also the kingdom with all his followers.

997. THIS composition brought only a short interval to the miseries of the English. The Danish pirates appeared soon after in the Severne; and having committed spoil in Wales, as well as in Cornwall and Devonshire, they sailed round to the south coast, and entering the Tamar, completed the devastation of these two counties. They then returned to the Bristol-channel; and penetrating into the country by the Avon, spread themselves over all that neighbourhood, and carried fire and sword even into Dorsetshire. They
 998. next changed the seat of war; and after ravaging the Isle of Wight, they entered the Thames and Medway, and laid siege to Rochester, where they defeated the Kentish-men in a pitched battle.

After this victory the whole province of Kent was made a scene of slaughter, fire, and devastation. The extremity of these miseries forced the English into counsels for common defence both by sea and land; but the weakness of the king, the divisions among the nobility, the treachery of some, the cowardice of others, the want of concert in all, frustrated every endeavour: Their fleets and armies either came too late to attack the enemy, or were repulsed with dishonour; and the people were thus equally ruined by resistance or by submission. The English, therefore, destitute both of prudence and unanimity in council, of courage and conduct in the field, had recourse to the same weak expedient, which by experience they had already found so ineffectual: They offered the Danes to buy peace by paying them a large sum of money. These ravagers rose continually in their demands; and now required the payment of 24,000 pounds, to which the English were so mean and imprudent as to submit^{*}. The departure of the Danes procured them another short interval of repose, which they enjoyed as if it were to be perpetual, without making any effectual preparations for a more vigorous resistance upon the next return of the enemy.

BESIDES receiving this sum, the Danes were engaged by another motive to depart a kingdom, which appeared so little in a situation to resist

^{*} Hoveden, p. 429. Chron. Mailr. p. 153.

CHAP. III. their efforts : They were invited over by their countrymen in Normandy, who at this time were hard pressed by the arms of Robert, king of France, and who found it difficult to defend the settlement, which, with so much advantage to themselves and glory to their nation, they had made in that country. It is probable, also, that Ethelred, observing the close connexions thus maintained among all the Danes, however divided in government or situation, was desirous of forming an alliance with that formidable people : For this purpose, being now a widower, he made his addressee to Emma, sister to Richard II. duke of Normandy, and he soon succeeded in his negociation. The princess came over this year to England, and was married to Ethelred⁵.

1001.
Settlement
of the Nor-
mans.

IN the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century; when the north, not yet exhausted by that multitude of people or rather nations, which she had successively emitted, sent forth a new race, not of conquerors, as before, but of pirates and ravagers, who infested the countries possessed by her once warlike sons; lived Rollo, a petty prince or chieftain in Denmark, whose valour and abilities soon engaged the attention of his countrymen. He was exposed in his youth to the jealousy of the king of Denmark, who attacked his small, but independent principality; and who, being foiled in every assault, had recourse at last to perfidy for effectuating his purpose,

⁵ H. Hunt. p. 359. Higden, p. 271.

which he had so often attempted in vain by force of arms ⁶ : He lulled Rollo into security by an insidious peace ; and falling suddenly upon him, murdered his brother and his bravest officers, and forced him to fly for safety into Scandinavia. Here many of his ancient subjects, induced partly by affection to their prince , partly by the oppressions of the Danish monarch , ranged themselves under his standard , and offered to follow him in every enterprize. Rollo , instead of attempting to recover his paternal dominions , where he must expect a vigorous resistance from the Danes , determined to pursue an easier , but more important undertaking , and to make his fortune , in imitation of his countrymen , by pillaging the richer and more southern coasts of Europe. He collected a body of troops , which , like that of all those ravagers , was composed of Norwegians , Swedes , Frisians , Danes , and adventurers of all nations , who , being accustomed to a roving , unsettled life , took delight in nothing but war and plunder. His reputation brought him associates from all quarters ; and a vision , which he pretended to have appeared to him in his sleep , and which , according to his interpretation of it , prognosticated the greatest successes , proved also a powerful incentive with those ignorant and superstitious people ⁷.

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III.

⁶ Dudo ex edit. Duchesne , p. 70 , 71. Gul. Gemet. lib. 2. cap. 2 , 3.

⁷ Dudo , p. 71. Gul. Gem. in epist. ad Gul. Conq.

C H A P. THE first attempt, made by Rollo, was on
III. England, near the end of Alfred's reign; when that great monarch, having settled Guthrun and his followers in East-Anglia, and others of those free-booters in Northumberland, and having restored peace to his harassed country, had established the most excellent military as well as civil institutions among the English. The prudent Dane, finding that no advantages could be gained over such a people, governed by such a prince, soon turned his enterprizes against France, which he found more exposed to his inroads^{*}; and during the reigns of Eudes, an usurper, and of Charles the Simple, a weak prince, he committed the most destructive ravages both on the inland and maritime provinces of that kingdom. The French, having no means of defence against a leader, who united all the valour of his countrymen with the policy of more civilized nations, were obliged to submit to the expedient practised by Alfred, and to offer the invaders a settlement in some of those provinces, which they had depopulated by their arms[†].

THE reason why the Danes for many years pursued measures so different from those which had been embraced by the Goths, Vandals, Franks, Burgundians, Lombards, and other northern conquerors, was the great difference, in the method of attack, which was practised by

^{*} Gul. Gemet. lib. 2. cap. 6.

[†] Dudo, p. 82.

these several nations, and to which the nature of their respective situations necessarily confined them. The latter tribes, living in an inland country, made incursions by land upon the Roman empire; and when they entered far into the frontiers, they were obliged to carry along with them their wives and families, whom they had no hopes of soon re-visiting, and who could not otherwise participate of their plunder. This circumstance quickly made them think of forcing a settlement in the provinces, which they had over-run; and these barbarians, spreading themselves over the country, found an interest in protecting the property and industry of the people, whom they had subdued. But the Danes and Norwegians, invited by their maritime situation, and obliged to maintain themselves in their uncultivated country by fishing, had acquired some experience of navigation; and in their military excursions pursued the method practised against the Roman empire by the more early Saxons: They made descents in small bodies from their ships or rather boats, and ravaging the coasts, returned with the booty to their families, whom they could not conveniently carry along with them in those hazardous enterprizes. But when they increased their armaments, made incursions into the inland countries, and found it safe to remain longer in the midst of the enfeebled enemy, they had been accustomed to crowd their vessels with their wives and children, and having no longer any temptation to return to their own country, they willingly embraced an oppor-

III. O H A P. tunity of settling in the warm climates and cultivated fields of the south.

AFFAIRS were in this situation with Rollo and his followers, when Charles proposed to relinquish to them part of the province formerly called Neustria, and to purchase peace on these hard conditions. After all the terms were fully settled, there appeared only one circumstance shocking to the haughty Dane: He was required to do homage to Charles for this province, and to put himself in that humiliating posture, imposed on vassals by the rites of the feudal law. He long refused to submit to this indignity; but being unwilling to lose such important advantages for a mere ceremony, he made a sacrifice of his pride to his interest, and acknowledged himself in form the vassal of the French monarch¹⁹. Charles gave him his daughter, Gisla, in marriage; and that he might bind him faster to his interests, made him a donation of a considerable territory, besides that which he was obliged to surrender to him by his stipulations. When some of the French nobles informed him, that, in return for so generous a present, it was expected, that he should throw himself at the king's feet, and make suitable acknowledgments for his bounty; Rollo replied, that he would rather decline the present; and it was with some difficulty they could persuade him to make that compliment by one of his captains. The Dane, commissioned for this purpose,

¹⁹ Ypod. Neust. p. 417.

full of indignation at the order, and despising so C H A P.
unwarlike a prince, caught Charles by the foot, III.
and pretending to carry it to his mouth, that he
might kiss it, overthrew him before all his cour-
tiers. The French, sensible of their present
weakness, found it prudent to overlook this
insult¹¹.

ROLLO, who was now in the decline of life,
and was tired of wars and depredations, applied
himself, with mature counsels, to the settlement
of his new-acquired territory, which was thence-
forth called Normandy; and he parcelled it out
among his captains and followers. He followed in
this partition the customs of the feudal law,
which was then universally established in the
southern countries of Europe, and which suited
the peculiar circumstances of that age. He treated
the French subjects who submitted to him, with
mildness and justice; he reclaimed his ancient
followers from their ferocious violence; he
established law and order throughout his state;
and after a life spent in tumults and ravages, he
died peaceably in a good old age, and left his
dominions to his posterity¹².

WILLIAM I. who succeeded him, governed the
dutchy twenty-five years; and during that
time, the Normans were thoroughly intermingled
with the French, had acquired their language,
had imitated their manners, and had made such

¹¹ Gul. Gemet. lib. 2. cap. 17.

¹² Ibid. lib. 2. cap. 19, 20, 21.

C H A P. III. progress towards cultivation, that, on the death of William, his son, Richard, though a minor¹³, inherited his dominions: A sure proof, that the Normans were already somewhat advanced in civility, and that their government could now rest secure on its laws and civil institutions, and was not wholly sustained by the abilities of the sovereign. Richard, after a long reign of fifty-four years, was succeeded by his son of the same name in the year 996¹⁴; which was eighty-five years after the first establishment of the Normans in France. This was the duke, who gave his sister, Emma, in marriage to Ethelred, king of England, and who thereby formed connexions with a country, which his posterity was so soon after destined to subdue.

THE Danes had been established during a longer period in England than in France; and though the similarity of their original language to that of the Saxons invited them to a more early coalition with the natives, they had hitherto found so little example of civilized manners among the English, that they retained all their ancient ferocity, and valued themselves only on their national character of military bravery. The recent, as well as more ancient achievements of their countrymen, tended to support this idea; and the English princes, particularly Athelstan and Edgar, sensible of that superiority, had been

¹³ Order. Vitalis, p. 459. Gul. Gemet. lib. 4. cap. I.

¹⁴ Order. Vitalis, p. 459.

accustomed to keep in pay bodies of Danish troops, who were quartered about the country, and committed many violences upon the inhabitants. These mercenaries had attained to such a height of luxury, according to the old English writers¹⁵, that they combed their hair once a day, bathed themselves once a week, changed their cloaths frequently; and by all these arts of effeminacy, as well as by their military character, had rendered themselves so agreeable to the fair sex, that they debauched the wives and daughters of the English, and dishonoured many families. But what most provoked the inhabitants, was, that, instead of defending them against invaders, they were ever ready to betray them to the foreign Danes, and to associate themselves with all straggling parties of that nation. The animosity, between the inhabitants of English and Danish race, had, from these repeated injuries, risen to a great height; when Ethelred, from a policy incident to weak princes, embraced the cruel resolution of massacring the latter throughout all his dominions¹⁶. Secret orders were dispatched to commence the execution every where on the same day; and the festival of St. Brice, which fell on a Sunday, the day on which the Danes usually bathed themselves, was chosen for that purpose. It is needless to repeat the accounts transmitted

1002.

Nov. 13.

¹⁵ Wallingford, p. 547.

¹⁶ See note [D] at the end of the volume.

E H A P. concerning the barbarity of this massacre : The
 III. rage of the populace , excited by so many injuries , sanctified by authority , and stimulated by example , distinguished not between innocence and guilt , spared neither sex nor age , and was not satiated without the tortures , as well as death , of the unhappy victims. Even Gunilda , sister to the king of Denmark , who had married Earl Paling , and had embraced Christianity , was by the advice of Edric , earl of Wilts , seized and condemned to death by Ethelred , after seeing her husband and children butchered before her face. This unhappy princess foretold , in the agonies of despair , that her murder would soon be avenged by the total ruin of the English nation.

1003.

NEVER was prophecy better fulfilled ; and never did barbarous policy prove more fatal to the authors. Sweyn and his Danes , who wanted but a pretence for invading the English , appeared off the western coast , and threatened to take full revenge for the slaughter of their countrymen. Exeter fell first into their hands , from the negligence or treachery of earl Hugh , a Norman , who had been made governor by the interest of Queen Emma. They began to spread their devastations over the country ; when the English , sensible what outrages they must now expect from their barbarous and offended enemy , assembled more early and in greater numbers than usual , and made an appearance of vigorous resistance. But all these preparations were frustrated by the treachery

of duke Alfric, who was intrusted with the command, and who, feigning sickness, refused to lead the army against the Danes, till it was dispirited, and at last dissipated, by his fatal misconduct. Alfric soon after died; and Edric, a greater traitor than he, who had married the king's daughter, and had acquired a total ascendant over him, succeeded Alfric in the government of Mercia, and in the command of the English armies. A great famine, proceeding partly from the bad seasons, partly from the decay of agriculture, added to all the other miseries of the inhabitants. The country, wasted by the Danes, harassed by the fruitless expeditions of its own forces, was reduced to the utmost desolation; and at last submitted to the infamy of purchasing a precarious peace from the enemy, by the payment of 30,000 pounds.

H A P.
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1007.

THE English endeavoured to employ this interval in making preparations against the return of the Danes, which they had reason soon to expect. A law was made, ordering the proprietors of eight hides of land to provide each a horseman and a complete suit of armour; and those of 310 hides to equip a ship for the defence of the coast. When this navy was assembled, which must have consisted of near eight hundred vessels¹⁷, all hopes of its success were disappointed by the

¹⁷ There were 243, 600 hides in England. Consequently the ships equipped must be 785. The cavalry was 30, 450 men.

C H A P. III. factions, animosities, and dissensions of the nobility. Edric had impelled his brother Brightric to prefer an accusation of treason against Wolfnoth, governor of Suffex, the father of the famous earl Godwin; and that nobleman, well acquainted with the malevolence as well as power of his enemy, found no means of safety but in deserting with twenty ships to the Danes. Brightric pursued him with a fleet of eighty sail; but his ships being shattered in a tempest, and stranded on the coast, he was suddenly attacked by Wolfnoth, and all his vessels burnt and destroyed. The imbecility of the king was little capable of repairing this misfortune: The treachery of Edric frustrated every plan for future defence: And the English navy, disconcerted, discouraged, and divided, was at last scattered into its several harbours.

It is almost impossible, or would be tedious, to relate particularly all the miseries to which the English were thenceforth exposed. We hear of nothing but the sacking and burning of towns; the devastation of the open country; the appearance of the enemy in every quarter of the kingdom; their cruel diligence in discovering any corner, which had not been ransacked by their former violence. The broken and disjointed narration of the ancient historians is here well adapted to the nature of the war, which was conducted by such sudden inroads, as would have been dangerous even to an united and well governed kingdom, but proved fatal, where

nothing but a general consternation, and mutual diffidence and dissension prevailed. The governors of one province refused to march to the assistance of another, and were at last terrified from assembling their forces for the defence of their own province. General councils were summoned; but either no resolution was taken, or none was carried into execution. And the only expedient, in which the English agreed, was the base and imprudent one, of buying anew a peace from the Danes by the payment of 48,000 pounds.

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THIS measure did not bring them even that short interval of repose, which they had expected from it. The Danes, disregarding all engagements, continued their devastations and hostilities; levied a new contribution of 8000 pounds upon the county of Kent alone; murdered the archbishop of Canterbury, who had refused to countenance this exaction; and the English nobility found no other resource than that of submitting every where to the Danish monarch, swearing allegiance to him, and delivering him hostages for their fidelity. Ethelred, equally afraid of the violence of the enemy, and the treachery of his own subjects, fled into Normandy, whither he had sent before him Queen Emma, and her two sons, Alfred and Edward. Richard received his unhappy guests with a generosity that does honour to his memory.

1011.

1013.

THE king had not been above six weeks in Normandy, when he heard of the death of Sweyn, who expired at Gainsborough, before he had

1014.

C H A P. time to establish himself in his new-acquired
III. dominions. The English prelates and nobility, taking advantage of this event, sent over a deputation to Normandy; inviting Ethelred to return to them, expressing a desire of being again governed by their native prince, and intimating their hopes, that, being now tutored by experience, he would avoid all those errors, which had been attended with such misfortunes to himself and to his people. But the misconduct of Ethelred was incurable; and on his resuming the government, he discovered the same incapacity, indolence, cowardice, and credulity, which had so often exposed him to the insults of his enemies. His son-in-law, Edric, notwithstanding his repeated treasons, retained such influence at court, as to instil into the king jealousies of Sigefert and Morcar, two of the chief nobles of Mercia: Edric allured them into his house, where he murdered them; while Ethelred participated in the infamy of the action, by confiscating their estates, and thrusting into a convent the widow of Sigefert. She was a woman of singular beauty and merit; and in a visit which was paid her, during her confinement, by prince Edmond, the king's eldest son, she inspired him with so violent an affection, that he released her from the convent, and soon after married her, without the consent of his father.

MEAN while the English found in Canute, the son and successor of Sweyn; an enemy no less terrible than the prince, from whom death had so lately delivered them. He ravaged the eastern coast

coast with merciless fury, and put ashore all the English hostages at Sandwich, after having cut off their hands and noses. He was obliged, by the necessity of his affairs, to make a voyage to Denmark; but returning soon after, he continued his depredations along the southern coast: He even broke into the counties of Dorset, Wilts, and Somerset; where an army was assembled against him, under the command of prince Edmond and duke Edric. The latter still continued his perfidious machinations: After endeavouring in vain to get the prince into his power, he found means to disperse the army; and he then openly deserted to Canute with forty vessels.

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1015.

NOTWITHSTANDING this misfortune, Edmond was not disconcerted; but assembling all the force of England, was in a condition to give battle to the enemy. The king had had such frequent experience of perfidy among his subjects, that he had lost all confidence in them: He remained at London, pretending sickness, but really from apprehensions, that they intended to buy their peace, by delivering him into the hands of his enemies. The army called aloud for their sovereign to march at their head against the Danes; and on his refusal to take the field, they were so discouraged, that those vast preparations became ineffectual for the defence of the kingdom. Edmond, deprived of all regular supplies to maintain his soldiers, was obliged to commit equal ravages with those which were practised by the Danes; and after making some fruitless expeditions into

C H A P. the north, which had submitted entirely to
 III. Canute's power, he retired to London, determined
 there to maintain to the last extremity the small
 remains of English liberty. He here found every
 1016. thing in confusion by the death of the king, who
 expired after an unhappy and inglorious reign of
 thirty-five years. He left two sons by his first
 marriage, Edmond, who succeeded him, and
 Edwy, whom Canute afterwards murdered. His
 two sons by the second marriage, Alfred and
 Edward, were, immediately upon Ethelred's
 death, conveyed into Normandy by Queen Emma.

EDMOND Ironside.

THIS prince, who received the name of Ironside
 from his hardy valour, possessed courage and abi-
 lities, sufficient to have prevented his country from
 sinking into those calamities, but not to raise it
 from that abyss of misery, into which it had
 already fallen. Among the other misfortunes of
 the English, treachery and disaffection had crept
 in among the nobility and prelates; and Edmond
 found no better expedient for stopping the farther
 progress of these fatal evils, than to lead his ar-
 my instantly into the field, and to employ them
 against the common enemy. After meeting with
 some success at Gillingham, he prepared himself
 to decide in one general engagement the fate of
 his crown: And at Scoerston, in the county of
 Gloucester, he offered battle to the enemy, who
 were commanded by Canute and Edric. Fortune

In the beginning of the day declared for him; but Edric, having cut off the head of one Osmar, whose countenance resembled that of Edmond, fixed it on a spear, carried it through the ranks in triumph, and called aloud to the English, that it was time to fly; for behold! the head of your sovereign. And though Edmond, observing the consternation of the troops, took off his helmet and showed himself to them, the utmost he could gain by his activity and valour was to leave the victory undecided. Edric now took a surer method to ruin him, by pretending to desert to him; and as Edmond was well acquainted with his power, and probably knew no other of the chief nobility in whom he could repose more confidence, he was obliged notwithstanding the repeated perfidy of the man, to give him a considerable command in the army. A battle soon after ensued at Assington in Essex; where Edric, flying in the beginning of the day, occasioned the total defeat of the English, followed by a great slaughter of the nobility. The indefatigable Edmond, however, had still resources: Assembling a new army at Gloucester, he was again in a condition to dispute the field; when the Danish and English nobility, equally harassed with those convulsions, obliged their kings to come to a compromise, and to divide the kingdom between them by treaty. Canute reserved to himself the northern division, consisting of Mercia, East-Anglia, and Northumberland, which he had entirely subdued: The southern parts were left to Edmond. This prince survived the treaty

C H A P. III. about a month: He was murdered at Oxford by two of his chamberlains, accomplices of Edric, who thereby made way for the succession of Canute the Dane to the crown of England.

C A N U T E.

1017.

THE English, who had been unable to defend their country, and maintain their independency, under so active and brave a prince as Edmond, could, after his death, expect nothing but total subjection from Canute, who, active and brave himself, and at the head of a great force, was ready to take advantage of the minority of Edwin and Edward, the two sons of Edmond. Yet this conqueror, who was commonly so little scrupulous, showed himself anxious to cover his injustice under plausible pretences: Before he seized the dominions of the English princes, he summoned a general assembly of the states, in order to fix the succession of the kingdom. He here suborned some nobles to depose, that, in the treaty of Gloucester, it had been verbally agreed, either to name Canute, in case of Edmond's death, successor to his dominions, or tutor to his children (for historians vary in this particular): And that evidence, supported by the great power of Canute, determined the states immediately to put the Danish monarch in possession of the government. Canute, jealous of the two princes, but sensible that he should render himself extremely odious, if he ordered them to be

dispatched in England, sent them abroad to his ally, the king of Sweden, whom he desired, as soon as they arrived at his court, to free him, by their death, from all farther anxiety. The Swedish monarch was too generous to comply with the request; but being afraid of drawing on himself a quarrel with Canute, by protecting the young princes, he sent them to Solomon, king of Hungary, to be educated in his court. The elder, Edwin, was afterwards married to the sister of the king of Hungary; but the English prince dying without issue, Solomon gave his sister-in-law, Agatha, daughter of the emperor Henry II. in marriage to Edward, the younger brother; and she bore him Edgar Atheling, Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland, and Christina, who retired into a convent.

CANUTE, though he had reached the great point of his ambition, in obtaining possession of the English crown, was obliged at first to make great sacrifices to it; and to gratify the chief of the nobility, by bestowing on them the most extensive governments and jurisdictions. He created Thurkill earl or duke of East-Anglia, (for these titles were then nearly of the same import) Yric of Northumberland, and Edric of Mercia; reserving only to himself the administration of Wessex. But seizing afterwards a favourable opportunity, he expelled Thurkill and Yric from their governments, and banished them the kingdom: He put to death many of the English nobility, on whose fidelity he could not rely, and whom he

C H A P. hated on account of their disloyalty to their native
 III. prince. And even the traitor, Edric, having had the assurance to reproach him with his services, was condemned to be executed, and his body to be thrown into the Thames; a suitable reward for his multiplied acts of perfidy and rebellion.

CANUTE also found himself obliged, in the beginning of his reign, to load the people with heavy taxes, in order to reward his Danish followers: He exacted from them at one time the sum of 72,000 pounds; besides 11,000 pounds, which he levied on London alone. He was probably willing, from political motives, to mulct severely that city, on account of the affection which it had borne to Edmond, and the resistance which it had made to the Danish power in two obstinate sieges¹⁸. But these rigours were imputed to necessity; and Canute, like a wise prince, was determined, that the English, now deprived of all their dangerous leaders, should be reconciled to the Danish yoke, by the justice and impartiality of his administration. He sent back to Denmark as many of his followers as he could safely spare: He restored the Saxon customs in a general assembly of the states. He made no distinction between Danes and English in the distribution of justice: And he took care, by a strict execution of law, to protect the lives and

¹⁸ W. Malm. p. 72. In one of these sieges, Canute diverted the course of the Thames, and by that means brought his ships above London-bridge.

properties of all his people. The Danes were gradually incorporated with his new subjects; and both were glad to obtain a little respite from those multiplied calamities, from which the one, no less than the other, had, in their fierce contest for power, experienced such fatal consequences.

THE removal of Edmond's children into so distant a country as Hungary, was, next to their death, regarded by Canute as the greatest security to his government: He had no farther anxiety, except with regard to Alfred and Edward, who were protected and supported by their uncle, Richard, duke of Normandy. Richard even fitted out a great armament, in order to restore the English princes to the throne of their ancestors; and though the navy was dispersed by a storm, Canute saw the danger to which he was exposed, from the enmity of so warlike a people as the Normans. In order to acquire the friendship of the duke, he paid his addresses to queen Emma, the sister of that prince; and promised, that he would leave the children, whom he should have by that marriage, in possession of the crown of England. Richard complied with his demand, and sent over Emma to England, where she was soon after married to Canute¹⁹. The English, though they disapproved of her espousing the mortal enemy of her former husband and his family, were pleased to find at court a sovereign, to whom they were accustomed, and who had already formed

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¹⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 151. W. Malmes. p. 73.

CHAP. III. connexions with them : And thus Canute, besides securing, by this marriage, the alliance of Normandy, gradually acquired, by the same means, the confidence of his own subjects²⁰. The Norman prince did not long survive the marriage of Emma; and he left the inheritance of the dutchy to his eldest son of the same name; who, dying a year after him without children, was succeeded by his brother Robert, a man of valour and abilities.

CANUTE, having settled his power in England beyond all danger of a revolution, made a voyage to Denmark, in order to resist the attacks of the king of Sweden; and he carried along with him a great body of the English, under the command of earl Godwin. This nobleman had here an opportunity of performing a service, by which he both reconciled the king's mind to the English nation, and gaining to himself the friendship of his sovereign, laid the foundation of that immense fortune which he acquired to his family. He was stationed next the Swedish camp; and observing a favourable opportunity, which he was obliged suddenly to seize, he attacked the enemy in the night, drove them from their trenches, threw them into disorder, pursued his advantage, and obtained a decisive victory over them. Next morning, Canute, seeing the English camp entirely abandoned, imagined that these disaffected troops had deserted to the enemy: He was agreeably surpris'd to find, that they were at that time

²⁰ W. Malmesb. p. 73. Higden, p. 275.

engaged in pursuit of the discomfited Swedes. He was so pleased with this success, and with the manner of obtaining it, that he bestowed his daughter in marriage upon Godwin, and treated him ever after with entire confidence and regard.

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IN another voyage, which he made afterwards to Denmark, Canute attacked Norway, and expelling the just, but unwarlike Olaus, kept possession of his kingdom, till the death of that prince. He had now by his conquests and valour attained the utmost height of grandeur: Having leisure from wars and intrigues, he felt the unsatisfactory nature of all human enjoyments; and equally weary of the glories and turmoils of this life, he began to cast his view towards that future existence, which it is so natural for the human mind, whether satiated by prosperity or disgusted with adversity, to make the object of its attention. Unfortunately, the spirit which prevailed in that age gave a wrong direction to his devotion: Instead of making compensation to those whom he had injured by his former acts of violence, he employed himself entirely in those exercises of piety, which the monks represented as the most meritorious. He built churches, he endowed monasteries, he enriched the ecclesiastics, and he bestowed revenues for the support of chantries at Assington and other places; where he appointed prayers to be said for the souls of those who had there fallen in battle against him. He even undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, where he resided a considerable time; Besides obtaining from

1028.

C H A P. the pope some privileges for the English school
 III. erected there, he engaged all the princes, through whose dominions he was obliged to pass, to desist from those heavy impositions and tolls, which they were accustomed to exact from the English pilgrims. By this spirit of devotion, no less than by his equitable and politic administration, he gained, in a good measure, the affections of his subjects.

CANUTE, the greatest and most powerful monarch of his time, sovereign of Denmark and Norway, as well as of England, could not fail of meeting with adulation from his courtiers; a tribute which is liberally paid even to the meanest and weakest princes. Some of his flatterers breaking out, one day, in admiration of his grandeur, exclaimed that every thing was possible for him: Upon which the monarch, it is said, ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore, while the tide was rising; and as the waters approached, he commanded them to retire, and to obey the voice of him who was lord of the ocean. He feigned to sit some time in expectation of their submission; but when the sea still advanced towards him, and began to wash him with its billows, he turned to his courtiers, and remarked to them, that every creature in the universe was feeble and impotent, and that power resided with one Being alone, in whose hands were all the elements of nature; who could say to the ocean, *Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther*; and who could

level with his nod the most towering piles of human pride and ambition.

THE only memorable action, which Canute performed after his return from Rome, was an expedition against Malcolm, king of Scotland. During the reign of Ethelred, a tax of a shilling a hide had been imposed on all the lands of England. It was commonly called *Danegelt*; because the revenue had been employed, either in buying peace with the Danes, or in making preparations against the inroads of that hostile nation. That monarch had required, that the same tax should be paid by Cumberland, which was held by the Scots; but Malcolm, a warlike prince, told him, that, as he was always able to repulse the Danes by his own power, he would neither submit to buy peace of his enemies, nor pay others for resisting them. Ethelred, offended at this reply, which contained a secret reproach on his own conduct, undertook an expedition against Cumberland; but though he committed ravages upon the country, he could never bring Malcolm to a temper more humble or submissive. Canute, after his accession, summoned the Scottish king to acknowledge himself a vassal for Cumberland to the crown of England; but Malcolm refused compliance, on pretence that he owed homage to those princes only, who inherited that kingdom by right of blood. Canute was not of a temper to bear this insult; and the king of Scotland soon found, that the sceptre was in very different hands from those of the feeble and

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C H A P. irrefolute Ethelred. Upon Canute's appearing
III. on the frontiers with a formidable army, Malcolm agreed, that his grandson and heir, Duncan, whom he put in possession of Cumberland, should make the submissions required, and that the heirs of Scotland should always acknowledge themselves vassals to England for that province²¹.

CANUTE passed four years in peace after this enterprize, and he died at Shaftsbury²²; leaving three sons, Sweyn, Harold, and Hardicanute. Sweyn, whom he had by his first marriage with Alfwen, daughter of the earl of Hampshire, was crowned in Norway: Hardicanute, whom Emma had born him, was in possession of Denmark: Harold, who was of the same marriage with Sweyn, was at that time in England.

H A R O L D H A R E F O O T.

1035. **T**HOUGH Canute, in his treaty with Richard duke of Normandy, had stipulated, that his children by Emma should succeed to the crown of England, he had either considered himself as released from that engagement by the death of Richard, or esteemed it dangerous to leave an unsettled and newly-conquered kingdom in the hands of so young a prince as Hardicanute: He therefore appointed, by his will, Harold successor to the crown. This prince was besides present,

²¹ W. Malm. p. 74.

²² Chron. Sax. p. 154. W. Malm. p. 76.

to maintain his claim; he was favoured by all the Danes; and he got immediately possession of his father's treasures, which might be equally useful, whether he found it necessary to proceed by force or intrigue, in insuring his succession. On the other hand, Hardicanute had the suffrages of the English, who, on account of his being born among them of queen Emma, regarded him as their countryman; he was favoured by the articles of treaty with the duke of Normandy; and above all, his party was espoused by earl Godwin, the most powerful nobleman in the kingdom, especially in the province of Wessex, the chief seat of the ancient English. Affairs were likely to terminate in a civil war; when, by the interposition of the nobility of both parties, a compromise was made; and it was agreed, that Harold should enjoy, together with London, all the provinces north of the Thames, while the possession of the south should remain to Hardicanute: And till that prince should appear and take possession of his dominions, Emma fixed her residence at Winchester, and established her authority over her son's share of the partition.

MEANWHILE, Robert, duke of Normandy, died in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and being succeeded by a son, yet a minor, the two English princes, Alfred and Edward, who found no longer any countenance or protection in that country, gladly embraced the opportunity of paying a visit, with a numerous retinue, to their mother Emma, who seemed to be placed in a state

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of so much power and splendour at Winchester. But the face of affairs soon wore a melancholy aspect. Earl Godwin had been gained by the arts of Harold, who promised to espouse the daughter of that nobleman; and while the treaty was yet a secret, these two tyrants laid a plan for the destruction of the English princes. Alfred was invited to London by Harold with many professions of friendship; but when he had reached Guilford, he was set upon by Godwin's vassals, about six hundred of his train were murdered in the most cruel manner, he himself was taken prisoner, his eyes were put out, and he was conducted to the monastery of Ely, where he died soon after²³. Edward and Emma, apprized of the fate, which was awaiting them, fled beyond sea, the former into Normandy, the latter into Flanders. While Harold, triumphing in his bloody policy, took possession, without resistance, of all the dominions assigned to his brother.

THIS is the only memorable action, performed, during a reign of four years, by this prince, who gave so bad a specimen of his character, and whose bodily accomplishments alone are known to us, by his appellation of *Harefoot*, which he acquired from his agility in running.

²³ H. Hunt. p. 365. Ypod. Neustr. p. 434. Hoveden, p. 438. Chron. Mailr. p. 156. Higden, p. 277. Chron. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 39. Sim. Dun. p. 179. Abbas Rieval. p. 366. 374. Brompton, p. 935. Gul. Gem. lib. 7. cap. 11. Matth. West. p. 209. Flor. Wigorn. p. 622. Alur. Beverl. p. 118.

and walking. He died the 14th of April, 1039, little regretted or esteemed by his subjects; and left the succession open to his brother, Hardicanute.

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III.

HARDICANUTE.

HARDICANUTE, or Canute the Hardy, that is, the robust (for he too is chiefly known by his bodily accomplishments) though, by remaining so long in Denmark, he had been deprived of his share in the partition of the kingdom, had not abandoned his pretensions; and he had determined, before Harold's death, to recover by arms, what he had lost, either by his own negligence, or by the necessity of his affairs. On pretence of paying a visit to the queen dowager in Flanders, he had assembled a fleet of sixty sail, and was preparing to make a descent on England, when intelligence of his brother's death induced him to sail immediately to London, where he was received in triumph, and acknowledged king without opposition.

1039.

THE first act of Hardicanute's government afforded his subjects a bad prognostic of his future conduct. He was so enraged at Harold, for depriving him of his share of the kingdom, and for the cruel treatment of his brother Alfred, that, in an impotent desire of revenge against the dead, he ordered his body to be dug up, and to be thrown into the Thames: And when it was found by some fishermen, and buried in

C H A P. III. London, he ordered it again to be dug up, and to be thrown again into the river: But it was fished up a second time, and then interred with great secrecy. Godwin, equally servile and insolent, submitted to be his instrument in this unnatural and brutal action.

THAT nobleman knew, that he was universally believed to have been an accomplice in the barbarity exercised on Alfred, and that he was on that account obnoxious to Hardicanute; and perhaps he hoped, by displaying this rage against Harold's memory, to justify himself from having had any participation in his counsels. But prince Edward, being invited over by the king, immediately on his appearance, preferred an accusation against Godwin for the murder of Alfred, and demanded justice for that crime. Godwin, in order to appease the king, made him a magnificent present of a galley with a gilt stern, rowed by fourscore men, who wore each of them a gold bracelet on his arm, weighing sixteen ounces, and were armed and cloathed in the most sumptuous manner. Hardicanute, pleased with the splendour of this spectacle, quickly forgot his brother's murder; and on Godwin's swearing that he was innocent of the crime, he allowed him to be acquitted.

THOUGH Hardicanute, before his accession, had been called over by the vows of the English, he soon lost the affections of the nation by his misconduct; but nothing appeared more grievous to them, than his renewing the imposition of Danegelt

Danegelt, and obliging the nation to pay a great sum of money to the fleet, which brought him from Denmark. The discontents ran high in many places: In Worcester the populace rose, and put to death two of the collectors. The king, enraged at this opposition, swore vengeance against the city, and ordered three noblemen, Godwin, duke of Wessex, Siward, duke of Northumberland, and Leofric, duke of Mercia, to execute his menaces with the utmost rigour. They were obliged to set fire to the city, and deliver it up to be plundered by their foldiers; but they saved the lives of the inhabitants; whom they confined in a small island of the Severn, called Beverey, till, by their intercession, they were able to appease the king, and obtain the pardon of the suppliants.

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THIS violent government was of short duration. Hardicanute died in two years after his accession, at the nuptials of a Danish lord, which he had honoured with his presence. His usual habits of intemperance were so well known, that, notwithstanding his robust constitution, his sudden death gave as little surprize, as it did sorrow, to his subjects.

E D W A R D the C O N F E S S O R.

THE English, on the death of Hardicanute, saw a favourable opportunity for recovering their liberty, and for shaking off the Danish yoke, under which they had so long laboured. Sweyn,

1041.

C H A P. III. king of Norway, the eldest son of Canute, was absent; and as the two last kings had died without issue, none of that race presented himself, nor any whom the Danes could support as successor to the throne. Prince Edward was fortunately at court on his brother's demise; and though the descendants of Edmond Ironside were the true heirs of the Saxon family, yet their absence in so remote a country as Hungary, appeared a sufficient reason for their exclusion, to a people like the English, so little accustomed to observe a regular order in the succession of their monarchs. All delays might be dangerous; and the present occasion must hastily be embraced; while the Danes, without concert, without a leader, astonished at the present incident, and anxious only for their personal safety, durst not oppose the united voice of the nation.

BUT this concurrence of circumstances in favour of Edward, might have failed of its effect, had his succession been opposed by Godwin, whose power, alliances, and abilities gave him a great influence at all times, especially amidst those sudden opportunities, which always attend a revolution of government, and which, either seized or neglected, commonly prove decisive. There were opposite reasons, which divided men's hopes and fears with regard to Godwin's conduct. On the one hand, the credit of that nobleman lay chiefly in Wessex, which was almost entirely inhabited by English: It was therefore presumed, that he would second the

wishes of that people, in restoring the Saxon line, and in humbling the Danes, from whom he, as well as they, had reason to dread, as they had already felt, the most grievous oppressions. On the other hand, there subsisted a declared animosity between Edward and Godwin, on account of Alfred's murder; of which the latter had publicly been accused by the prince, and which he might believe so deep an offence, as could never, on account of any subsequent merits, be sincerely pardoned. But their common friends here interposed; and representing the necessity of their good correspondence, obliged them to lay aside all jealousy and rancour, and concur in restoring liberty to their native country. Godwin only stipulated, that Edward, as a pledge of his sincere reconciliation, should promise to marry his daughter Editha; and having fortified himself by this alliance, he summoned a general council at Gillingham, and prepared every measure for securing the succession to Edward. The English were unanimous and zealous in their resolutions; the Danes were divided and dispirited: Any small opposition, which appeared in this assembly, was brow-beaten and suppressed; and Edward was crowned king, with every demonstration of duty and affection.

THE triumph of the English, upon this signal and decisive advantage, was at first attended with some insult and violence against the Danes; but the king, by the mildness of his character, soon reconciled the latter to his administration,

C H A P. and the distinction between the two nations
 III. gradually disappeared. The Danes were inter-
 spersed with the English in most of the provinces;
 they spoke nearly the same language; they dif-
 fered little in their manners and laws; domestic
 dissensions in Denmark prevented, for some years,
 any powerful invasion from thence, which might
 awaken past animosities; and as the Norman conquest,
 which ensued soon after, reduced both nations to
 equal subjection, there is no farther mention in
 history of any difference between them. The joy,
 however, of their present deliverance made such
 impression on the minds of the English, that they
 instituted an annual festival for celebrating that
 great event; and it was observed in some counties,
 even to the time of Spellman²⁴.

THE popularity, which Edward enjoyed on
 his accession, was not destroyed by the first act
 of his administration, his resuming all the grants
 of his immediate predecessors; an attempt, which
 is commonly attended with the most dangerous
 consequences. The poverty of the crown con-
 vinced the nation, that this act of violence was
 become absolutely necessary; and as the loss fell
 chiefly on the Danes, who had obtained large
 grants from the late kings, their countrymen,
 on account of their services in subduing the
 kingdom, the English were rather pleased to see
 them reduced to their primitive poverty. The

²⁴ Spellm. Glossary in verbo *Hocday*.

king's severity also towards his mother, the queen-dowager, though exposed to some more censure, met not with very general disapprobation. He had hitherto lived on indifferent terms with that princess: He accused her of neglecting him and his brother during their adverse fortune²⁵: He remarked, that, as the superior qualities of Canute, and his better treatment of her, had made her entirely indifferent to the memory of Ethelred, she also gave the preference to her children of the second bed, and always regarded Hardicanute as her favourite. The same reasons had probably made her unpopular in England; and though her benefactions to the monks obtained her the favour of that order, the nation was not, in general, displeased to see her stripped by Edward of immense treasures which she had amassed. He confined her, during the remainder of her life, in a monastery at Winchester; but carried his rigour against her no farther. The stories of his accusing her of a participation in her son Alfred's murder, and of a criminal correspondence with the bishop of Winchester, and also of her justifying herself by treading barefoot, without receiving any hurt, over nine burning plough-shares, were the inventions of the monkish historians, and were propagated and believed from the silly wonder of posterity²⁶.

THE English flattered themselves, that, by the

²⁵ Anglia Sacra, vol. i. p. 237.

²⁶ Higden, p. 277.

C H A P. III. accession of Edward, they were delivered for ever from the dominion of foreigners; but they soon found, that this evil was not yet entirely removed. The king had been educated in Normandy; and had contracted many intimacies with the natives of that country, as well as an affection for their manners²⁷. The court of England was soon filled with Normans, who, being distinguished both by the favour of Edward, and by a degree of cultivation superior to that which was attained by the English in those ages, soon rendered their language, customs, and laws fashionable in the kingdom. The study of the French tongue became general among the people. The courtiers affected to imitate that nation in their dress, equipage, and entertainments: Even the lawyers employed a foreign language in their deeds and papers²⁸: But above all, the church felt the influence and dominion of those strangers: Ulf and William, two Normans, who had formerly been the king's chaplains, were created bishops of Dorchester and London. Robert, a Norman also, was promoted to the see of Canterbury²⁹, and always enjoyed the highest favour of his master, of which his abilities rendered him not unworthy. And though the king's prudence, or his want of authority, made him confer almost all the civil and military employments on the

²⁷ Ingulf. p. 62.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Chron. Sax. p. 161.

natives, the ecclesiastical preferments fell often to the share of the Normans; and as the latter possessed Edward's confidence, they had secretly a great influence on public affairs, and excited the jealousy of the English, particularly of earl Godwin ³⁰.

C H A P.
III.

THIS powerful nobleman, besides being duke or earl of Wessex, had the counties of Kent and Suffex annexed to his government. His eldest son, Sweyn, possessed the same authority in the counties of Oxford, Berks, Gloucester and Hereford: And Harold, his second son, was duke of East-Anglia, and at the same time governor of Essex. The great authority of this family was supported by immense possessions and powerful alliances; and the abilities, as well as ambition, of Godwin himself contributed to render it still more dangerous. A prince of greater capacity and vigour than Edward would have found it difficult to support the dignity of the crown under such circumstances; and as the haughty temper of Godwin made him often forget the respect due to his prince, Edward's animosity against him was grounded on personal as well as political considerations, on recent as well as more ancient injuries. The king, in pursuance of his engagements, had indeed married Editha, the daughter of Godwin ³¹; but this alliance became a fresh source of enmity between them. Edward's

³⁰ W. Malm. p. 80.

³¹ Chron. Sax. p. 157.

C H A P. III. hatred of the father was transferred to that princess; and Editha, though possessed of many amiable accomplishments, could never acquire the confidence and affection of her husband. It is even pretended, that, during the whole course of her life, he abstained from all commerce of love with her; and such was the absurd admiration paid to an inviolable chastity during those ages, that his conduct in this particular is highly celebrated by the monkish historians, and greatly contributed to his acquiring the title of saint and confessor ³².

1048.

THE most popular pretence, on which Godwin could ground his disaffection to the king and his administration, was to complain of the influence of the Normans in the government; and a declared opposition had thence arisen between him and these favourites. It was not long before this animosity broke into action. Eustace, count of Bologne, having paid a visit to the king, passed by Dover in his return: One of his train, being refused entrance to a lodging, which had been assigned him, attempted to make his way by force, and in the contest he wounded the master of the house. The inhabitants revenged this insult by the death of the stranger; the count and his train took arms, and murdered the wounded townsman; a tumult ensued; near twenty

³² W. Malm. p. 80. Higden, p. 277. Abbas Rieval. p. 366. 377. Matth. West. p. 221. Chron. Thom. Wykes, p. 21. Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 241.

persons were killed on each side; and Eustace, being overpowered by numbers, was obliged to save his life by flight from the fury of the populace. He hurried immediately to court and complained of the usage he had met with: The king entered zealously into the quarrel, and was highly displeased that a stranger of such distinction, whom he had invited over to his court, should, without any just cause, as he believed, have felt so sensibly the insolence and animosity of his people. He gave orders to Godwin, in whose government Dover lay, to repair immediately to the place, and to punish the inhabitants for the crime: But Godwin, who desired rather to encourage, than repress, the popular discontents against foreigners, refused obedience, and endeavoured to throw the whole blame of the riot on the count of Bologne, and his retinue³³. Edward, touched in so sensible a point, saw the necessity of exerting the royal authority; and he threatened Godwin, if he persisted in his disobedience, to make him feel the utmost effects of his resentment.

THE earl, perceiving a rupture to be unavoidable, and pleased to embark in a cause, where, it was likely, he should be supported by his countrymen, made preparations for his own defence, or rather for an attack on Edward. Under pretence of repressing some disorders on the Welsh frontier, he secretly assembled a great

³³ Chron. Sax. p. 163. W. Malm. p. 81. Higden, p. 279.

C H A P. army, and was approaching the king, who
III. resided, without any military force, and without suspicion, at Gloucester³⁴. Edward applied for protection to Siward, duke of Northumberland, and Leofric, duke of Mercia, two powerful noblemen, whose jealousy of Godwin's greatness, as well as their duty to the crown, engaged them to defend the king in this extremity. They hastened to him with such of their followers as they could assemble on a sudden; and finding the danger much greater than they had at first apprehended, they issued orders for mustering all the forces within their governments, and for marching them without delay to the defence of the king's person and authority. Edward, meanwhile, endeavoured to gain time by negociation; while Godwin, who thought the king entirely in his power, and who was willing to save appearances, fell into the snare; and not sensible, that he ought to have no farther reserve after he had proceeded so far, he lost the favourable opportunity of rendering himself master of the government.

THE English, though they had no high idea of Edward's vigour and capacity, bore him great affection on account of his humanity, justice, and piety, as well as the long race of their native kings, from whom he was descended; and they hastened from all quarters to defend him from the present danger. His army was now so

³⁴ Chron. Sax. p. 163. W. Malm. p. 81.

considerable, that he ventured to take the field; and marching to London, he summoned a great council to judge of the rebellion of Godwin and his sons. These noblemen pretended at first that they were willing to stand their trial; but having in vain endeavoured to make their adherents persist in rebellion, they offered to come to London, provided they might receive hostages for their safety: This proposal being rejected, they were obliged to disband the remains of their forces, and to have recourse to flight. Baldwin, earl of Flanders, gave protection to Godwin and his three sons, Gurth, Sweyn, and Tosti; the latter of whom had married the daughter of that prince: Harold and Leofwin, two others of his sons, took shelter in Ireland. The estates of the father and sons were confiscated: Their governments were given to others: Queen Editha was confined in a monastery at Warewel: And the greatness of this family, once so formidable, seemed now to be totally supplanted and overthrown.

BUT Godwin had fixed his authority on too firm a basis, and he was too strongly supported by alliances both foreign and domestic, not to occasion farther disturbances, and make new efforts for his re-establishment. The earl of Flanders permitted him to purchase and hire ships within his harbours; and Godwin, having manned them with his followers, and with free-booters of all nations, put to sea, and attempted to make a descent at Sandwich. The king, informed of

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1052.

C H A P. his preparations, had equipped a considerable
III. fleet, much superior to that of the enemy; and the earl hastily, before their appearance, made his retreat into the Flemish harbours³⁵. The English court, allured by the present security, and destitute of all vigorous counsels, allowed the seamen to disband, and the fleet to go to decay³⁶; while Godwin, expecting this event, kept his men in readiness for action. He put to sea immediately, and sailed to the Isle of Wight, where he was joined by Harold with a squadron, which that nobleman had collected in Ireland. He was now master of the sea; and entering every harbour on the southern coast, he seized all the ships³⁷, and summoned his followers in those counties, which had so long been subject to his government, to assist him in procuring justice to himself, his family, and his country, against the tyranny of foreigners. Reinforced by great numbers from all quarters, he entered the Thames; and appearing before London, threw every thing into confusion. The king alone seemed resolute to defend himself to the last extremity; but the interposition of the English nobility, many of whom favoured Godwin's pretensions, made Edward hearken to terms of accommodation; and the feigned humility of the earl, who disclaimed all intentions of offering violence to his sovereign,

³⁵ Sim. Dun. p. 186.

³⁶ Chron. Sax. p. 166.

³⁷ Ibid.

and desired only to justify himself by a fair and open trial, paved the way for his more easy admission. It was stipulated, that he should give hostages for his good behaviour, and that the primate and all the foreigners should be banished: By this treaty, the present danger of a civil war was obviated, but the authority of the crown was considerably impaired, or rather entirely annihilated. Edward, sensible that he had not power sufficient to secure Godwin's hostages in England, sent them over to his kinsman, the young duke of Normandy

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GODWIN's death, which happened soon after, while he was sitting at table with the king, prevented him from farther establishing the authority which he had acquired, and from reducing Edward to still greater subjection³⁸. He was succeeded in the government of Wessex, Sussex, Kent, and Essex, and in the office of steward of the household, a place of great power, by his son, Harold, who was actuated by an ambition equal to that of his father, and was superior to him in address, in insinuation, and in virtue. By a modest and gentle demeanour, he acquired the good-will of Edward; at least, softened that hatred which the prince had so long borne his family³⁹; and gaining every day new partizans by his bounty and affability, he proceeded, in a more silent, and therefore a more dangerous

³⁸ See note [E] at the end of the volume.

³⁹ Brompton, p. 948.

C H A P. manner, to the increase of his authority. The
III. king, who had not sufficient vigour directly to oppose his progress, knew of no other expedient than that hazardous one, of raising him a rival in the family of Leofric, duke of Mercia, whose son, Algar, was invested with the government of East-Anglia, which, before the banishment of Harold, had belonged to the latter nobleman. But this policy, of balancing opposite parties, required a more steady hand to manage it than that of Edward, and naturally produced faction, and even civil broils, among nobles of such mighty and independent authority. Algar was soon after expelled his government by the intrigues and power of Harold; but being protected by Griffith, prince of Wales, who had married his daughter, as well as by the power of his father, Leofric, he obliged Harold to submit to an accommodation, and was reinstated in the government of East-Anglia. This peace was not of long duration: Harold, taking advantage of Leofric's death, which happened soon after, expelled Algar anew, and banished him the kingdom: And though that nobleman made a fresh irruption into East-Anglia with an army of Norwegians, and over-ran the country, his death soon freed Harold from the pretensions of so dangerous a rival. Edward, the eldest son of Algar, was indeed advanced to the government of Mercia; but the balance, which the king desired to establish between those potent families was wholly lost, and the influence of Harold greatly preponderated.

C H A P.

III.

1055.

THE death of Siward, duke of Northumberland, made the way still more open to the ambition of that nobleman. Siward, besides his other merits, had acquired honour to England, by his successful conduct in the only foreign enterprize undertaken during the reign of Edward. Duncan, king of Scotland, was a prince of a gentle disposition, but possessed not the genius requisite for governing a country so turbulent, and so much infested by the intrigues and animosities of the great. Macbeth, a powerful nobleman, and nearly allied to the crown, not content with curbing the king's authority, carried still farther his pestilent ambition: He put his sovereign to death, chased Malcolm Kenmore, his son and heir, into England; and usurped the crown. Siward, whose daughter was married to Duncan, embraced, by Edward's orders, the protection of this distressed family: He marched an army into Scotland, and having defeated and killed Macbeth in battle, he restored Malcolm to the throne of his ancestors⁴⁰. This service, added to his former connexions with the royal family of Scotland, brought a great accession to the authority of Siward in the north; but as he had lost his eldest son, Osbern, in the action with Macbeth, it proved in the issue fatal to his family. His second son, Walthoef, appeared, on his father's death, too young

⁴⁰ W. Malm. p. 79. Hoveden, p. 443. Chron. Mailr. p. 158. Buchanan, p. 115. edit. 1715.

C H A P. to be entrusted with the government of Northum-
III. berland ; and Harold's influence obtained that
dukedom for his own brother Tosti.

THERE are two circumstances related of Siward, which discover his high sense of honour, and his martial disposition. When intelligence was brought him of his son Osbern's death, he was inconsolable ; till he heard, that the wound was received in the breast, and that he had behaved with great gallantry in the action. When he found his own death approaching, he ordered his servants to clothe him in a complete suit of armour ; and sitting erect on the couch, with a spear in his hand, declared, that, in that posture, the only one worthy of a warrior, he would patiently await the fatal moment.

THE king, now worn out with cares and infirmities, felt himself far advanced in the decline of life ; and having no issue himself, began to think of appointing a successor to the kingdom. He sent a deputation to Hungary, to invite over his nephew, Edward, son of his elder brother, and the only remaining heir of the Saxon line. That prince, whose succession to the crown would have been easy and undisputed, came to England with his children, Edgar, surnamed Atheling, Margaret and Christina ; but his death, which happened a few days after his arrival, threw the king into new difficulties. He saw, that the great power and ambition of Harold had tempted him to think of obtaining possession of the throne on the first vacancy, and that Edgar,
on

on account of his youth and inexperience, was C H A P.
 very unfit to oppose the pretensions of so popular III.
 and enterprising a rival. The animosity, which
 he had long borne to earl Godwin, made him
 averse to the succession of his son; and he could
 not, without extreme reluctance, think of an
 increase of grandeur to a family, which had risen
 on the ruins of royal authority, and which, by
 the murder of Alfred, his brother, had contri-
 buted so much to the weakening of the Saxon
 line. In this uncertainty, he secretly cast his
 eye towards his kinsman, William duke of Nor-
 mandy, as the only person whose power, and
 reputation, and capacity, could support any
 destination which he might make in his favour
 to the exclusion of Harold, and his family ⁴¹.

THIS famous prince was natural son of Robert,
 duke of Normandy, by Harlotta, daughter of a
 tanner in Falaise ⁴², and was very early established
 in that grandeur, from which his birth seemed
 to have set him at so great a distance. While
 he was but nine years of age, his father had
 resolved to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem;
 a fashionable act of devotion, which had taken
 place of the pilgrimages to Rome, and which,
 as it was attended with more difficulty and
 danger, and carried those religious adventurers to
 the first sources of Christianity, appeared to
 them more meritorious. Before his departure,

⁴¹ Ingulf, p. 68.

⁴² Brompton, p. 910.

CHAP. III. he assembled the states of the dutchy; and informing them of his design, he engaged them to swear allegiance to his natural son, William, whom, as he had no legitimate issue, he intended, in case he should die in the pilgrimage, to leave successor to his dominions⁴³. As he was a prudent prince, he could not but foresee the great inconveniences which must attend this journey, and this settlement of his succession; arising from the perpetual turbulency of the great, the claims of other branches of the ducal family, and the power of the French monarch: But all these considerations were surmounted by the prevailing zeal for pilgrimages⁴⁴; and probably, the more important they were, the more would Robert exult in sacrificing them to what he imagined to be his religious duty.

THIS prince, as he had apprehended, died in his pilgrimage; and the minority of his son was attended with all those disorders, which were almost unavoidable in that situation. The licentious nobles, freed from the awe of sovereign authority, broke out into personal animosities against each other, and made the whole country a scene of war and devastation⁴⁵. Roger, count of Toni, and Alain, count of Brittany, advanced claims to the dominion of the state; and Henry I. king of France, thought the opportunity favourable

⁴³ W. Malm. p. 95.

⁴⁴ Ypod. Neust. p. 452.

⁴⁵ W. Malm. p. 95. Gul. Gemet. lib. 7. cap. 1.

for reducing the power of a vassal, who had originally acquired his settlement in so violent and invidious a manner, and who had long appeared formidable to his sovereign⁴⁶. The regency established by Robert encountered great difficulties in supporting the government under this complication of dangers; and the young prince, when he came to maturity, found himself reduced to a very low condition. But the great qualities, which he soon displayed in the field and in the cabinet, gave encouragement to his friends, and struck a terror into his enemies. He opposed himself on all sides against his rebellious subjects, and against foreign invaders; and by his valour and conduct prevailed in every action. He obliged the French king to grant him peace on reasonable terms; he expelled all pretenders to the sovereignty; and he reduced his turbulent barons to pay submission to his authority, and to suspend their mutual animosities. The natural severity of his temper appeared in a rigorous administration of justice; and having found the happy effects of this plan of government, without which the laws in those ages became totally impotent, he regarded it as a fixed maxim, that an inflexible conduct was the first duty of a sovereign.

THE tranquillity, which he had established in his dominions, had given William leisure to pay a visit to the king of England during the time of Godwin's banishment; and he was received

⁴⁶ W. Malm. p. 97.

C H A P. in a manner suitable to the great reputation
III. which he had acquired, to the relation by which he was connected with Edward, and to the obligations which that prince owed to his family⁴⁷. On the return of Godwin, and the expulsion of the Norman favourites, Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, had, before his departure, persuaded Edward to think of adopting William as his successor; a counsel, which was favoured by the king's aversion to Godwin, his prepossessions for the Normans, and his esteem of the duke. That prelate, therefore, received a commission to inform William of the king's intentions in his favour; and he was the first person that opened the mind of the prince to entertain those ambitious hopes⁴⁸. But Edward, irresolute and feeble in his purpose, finding that the English would more easily acquiesce in the restoration of the Saxon line, had, in the mean time, invited his brother's descendants from Hungary, with a view of having them recognized heirs to the crown. The death of his nephew, and the inexperience and unpromising qualities of young Edgar, made him resume his former intentions in favour of the duke of Normandy; though his aversion to hazardous enterprizes engaged him to postpone the execution, and even to keep his purpose secret from all his ministers.

⁴⁷ Hoveden, p. 442. Ingulf. p. 65. Chron. Mailr. p. 157. Higden, p. 279.

⁴⁸ Ingulf, p. 68. Gul. Gemet. lib. 7. cap. 31. Order. Vitalis, p. 492.

HAROLD, mean while, proceeded, after a more open manner, in increasing his popularity, in establishing his power, and in preparing the way for his advancement on the first vacancy; an event which, from the age and infirmities of the king, appeared not very distant. But there was still an obstacle, which it was requisite for him previously to overcome. Earl Godwin, when restored to his power and fortune, had given hostages for his good behaviour; and among the rest one son and one grandson, whom Edward, for greater security, as has been related, had consigned to the custody of the duke of Normandy. Harold, though not aware of the duke's being his competitor, was uneasy, that such near relations should be detained prisoners in a foreign country; and he was afraid, lest William should, in favour of Edgar, retain these pledges as a check on the ambition of any other pretender. He represented, therefore, to the king, his unfeigned submission to royal authority, his steady duty to his prince, and the little necessity there was, after such an uniform trial of his obedience, to detain any longer those hostages, who had been required on the first composing of civil discords. By these topics, enforced by his great power, he extorted the king's consent to release them; and in order to effect his purpose, he immediately proceeded, with a numerous retinue, on his journey to Normandy. A tempest drove him on the territory of Guy, count of Ponthieu who, being informed of his quality, immediately

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C H A P. detained him prisoner, and demanded an exorbitant sum for his ransom. Harold found means to convey intelligence of his situation to the duke of Normandy; and represented, that while he was proceeding to *his* court, in execution of a commission from the king of England, he had met with this harsh treatment from the mercenary disposition of the count of Ponthieu.

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WILLIAM was immediately sensible of the importance of the incident. He foresaw, that, if he could once gain Harold, either by favours or menaces, his way to the throne of England would be open, and Edward would meet with no farther obstacle in executing the favourable intentions, which he had entertained in his behalf. He sent, therefore, a messenger to Guy, in order to demand the liberty of his prisoner; and that nobleman, not daring to refuse so great a prince, put Harold into the hands of the Norman, who conducted him to Rouen. William received him with every demonstration of respect and friendship; and after showing himself disposed to comply with his desire, in delivering up the hostages, he took an opportunity of disclosing to him the great secret, of his pretensions to the crown of England, and of the will which Edward intended to make in his favour. He desired the assistance of Harold in perfecting that design; he made professions of the utmost gratitude in return for so great an obligation; he promised that the present grandeur of Harold's family, which supported itself with difficulty under the jealousy

and hatred of Edward, should receive new increase from a successor, who would be so greatly beholden to him for his advancement. Harold was surprized at this declaration of the duke; but being sensible that he should never recover his own liberty, much less that of his brother and nephew, if he refused the demand, he feigned a compliance with William, renounced all hopes of the crown for himself, and professed his sincere intention of supporting the will of Edward, and seconding the pretensions of the duke of Normandy. William, to bind him faster to his interests, besides offering him one of his daughters in marriage, required him to take an oath, that he would fulfil his promises; and in order to render the oath more obligatory, he employed an artifice, well suited to the ignorance and superstition of the age. He secretly conveyed under the altar, on which Harold agreed to swear, the reliques of some of the most revered martyrs; and when Harold had taken the oath, he showed him the reliques, and admonished him to observe religiously an engagement, which had been ratified by so tremendous a sanction⁴⁹. The English nobleman was astonished; but dissembling his concern, he renewed the same professions, and was dismissed with all the marks of mutual confidence by the duke of Normandy.

WHEN Harold found himself at liberty, his

⁴⁹ Wace, p. 459, 460. MS. penes Carte, p. 354. W. Malm. p. 93. H. Hunt. p. 366. Hoveden, p. 449. Brompton, p. 947.

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III. ambition suggested casuistry sufficient to justify to him the violation of an oath, which had been extorted from him by fear, and which, if fulfilled, might be attended with the subjection of his native country to a foreign power. He continued still to practise every art of popularity; to increase the number of his partizans; to reconcile the minds of the English to the idea of his succession; to revive their hatred of the Normans; and by an ostentation of his power and influence, to deter the timorous Edward from executing his intended destination in favour of William. Fortune, about this time, threw two incidents in his way, by which he was enabled to acquire general favour, and to increase the character, which he had already attained, of virtue and abilities.

THE Welsh, though a less formidable enemy than the Danes, had long been accustomed to infest the western borders: And after committing spoil on the low countries, they usually made a hasty retreat into their mountains, where they were sheltered from the pursuit of their enemies, and were ready to seize the first favourable opportunity of renewing their depredations. Griffith, the reigning prince, had greatly distinguished himself in those incursions; and his name had become so terrible to the English, that Harold found he could do nothing more acceptable to the public, and more honourable for himself, than the suppressing of so dangerous an enemy. He formed the plan of an expedition against Wales; and

having prepared some light-armed foot to pursue the natives into their fastnesses, some cavalry to scour the open country, and a squadron of ships to attack the sea-coast, he employed at once all these forces against the Welsh, prosecuted his advantages with vigour, made no intermission in his assaults, and at last reduced the enemy to such distress, that, in order to prevent their total destruction, they made a sacrifice of their prince, whose head they cut off, and sent to Harold; and they were content to receive as their sovereigns two Welsh noblemen appointed by Edward to rule over them. The other incident was no less honourable to Harold.

TOSTI, brother of this nobleman, who had been created duke of Northumberland, being of a violent, tyrannical temper, had acted with such cruelty and injustice, that the inhabitants rose in rebellion, and chased him from his government. Morcar and Edwin, two brothers, who possessed great power in those parts, and who were grandsons of the great duke, Leofric, concurred in the insurrection; and the former, being elected duke, advanced with an army, to oppose Harold, who was commissioned by the king to reduce and chastise the Northumbrians. Before the armies came to action, Morcar, well acquainted with the generous disposition of the English commander, endeavoured to justify his own conduct. He represented to Harold, that Tosti had behaved in a manner unworthy of the station to which he was advanced, and no one, not even a brother,

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could support such tyranny, without participating, in some degree, of the infamy attending it; that the Northumbrians, accustomed to a legal administration, and regarding it as their birthright, were willing to submit to the king, but required a governor who would pay regard to their rights and privileges; that they had been taught by their ancestors, that death was preferable to servitude, and had taken the field determined to perish, rather than suffer a renewal of those indignities, to which they had so long been exposed; and they trusted, that Harold, on reflection, would not defend in another that violent conduct, from which he himself, in his own government, had always kept at so great a distance. This vigorous remonstrance was accompanied with such a detail of facts, so well supported, that Harold found it prudent to abandon his brother's cause; and returning to Edward, he persuaded him to pardon the Northumbrians, and to confirm Morcar in the government. He even married the sister of that nobleman⁵⁰; and by his interest procured Edwin, the younger brother, to be elected into the government of Mercia. Tosti in rage departed the kingdom, and took shelter in Flanders with earl Baldwin, his father-in-law.

By this marriage, Harold broke all measures with the duke of Normandy; and William clearly

⁵⁰ Order. Vitalis, p. 492.

perceived, that he could no longer rely on the oaths and promises, which he had extorted from him. But the English nobleman was now in such a situation, that he deemed it no longer necessary to dissemble. He had, in his conduct towards the Northumbrians, given such a specimen of his moderation as had gained him the affections of his countrymen. He saw, that almost all England was engaged in his interests; while he himself possessed the government of Wessex, Morcar that of Northumberland, and Edwin that of Mercia. He now openly aspired to the succession; and insisted, that, since it was necessary, by the confession of all, to set aside the royal family, on account of the imbecility of Edgar, the sole surviving heir, there was no one so capable of filling the throne, as a nobleman, of great power, of mature age, of long experience, of approved courage and abilities, who, being a native of the kingdom, would effectually secure it against the dominion and tyranny of foreigners. Edward, broken with age and infirmities, saw the difficulties too great for him to encounter; and though his inveterate prepossessions kept him from seconding the pretensions of Harold, he took but feeble and irresolute steps for securing the succession to the duke of Normandy⁵¹. While he continued in this uncertainty, he was surprised by sickness, which brought him to his grave,

⁵¹ See note [F] at the end of the volume.

C H A P. III. On the fifth of January 1066, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and twenty-fifth of his reign.

THIS prince, to whom the monks gave the title of saint and confessor, was the last of the Saxon line, that ruled in England. Though his reign was peaceable and fortunate, he owed his prosperity less to his own abilities than to the conjunctures of the times. The Danes, employed in other enterprizes, attempted not those incursions, which had been so troublesome to all his predecessors and fatal to some of them. The facility of his disposition made him acquiesce under the government of Godwin, and his son Harold; and the abilities, as well as the power of these noblemen, enabled them, while they were entrusted with authority, to preserve domestic peace and tranquillity. The most commendable circumstance of Edward's government was his attention to the administration of justice, and his compiling for that purpose a body of laws, which he collected from the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, and Alfred. This compilation, though now lost (for the laws that pass under Edward's name were composed afterwards ⁵²) was long the object of affection to the English nation.

EDWARD the Confessor was the first that touched for the king's evil: The opinion of his sanctity procured belief to this cure among the people: His successors regarded it as a part of their state and grandeur to uphold the same opinion.

⁵² Spellm. in verbo *Belliva*.

It has been continued down to our time; and the practice was first dropped by the present royal family, who observed, that it could no longer give amazement even to the populace, and was attended with ridicule in the eyes of all men of understanding.

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H A R O L D.

HAROLD had so well prepared matters before the death of Edward, that he immediately stepped into the vacant throne; and his accession was attended with as little opposition and disturbance, as if he had succeeded by the most undoubted hereditary title. The citizens of London were his zealous partizans: The bishops and clergy had adopted his cause: And all the powerful nobility, connected with him by alliance or friendship, willingly seconded his pretensions. The title of Edgar Atheling, was scarcely mentioned: Much less, the claim of the duke of Normandy: And Harold, assembling his partizans, received the crown from their hands, without waiting for the free deliberation of the states, or regularly submitting the question to their determination⁵³. If any were averse to this measure

1066.
January.

⁵³ G. Pict. p. 196. Ypod. Neust. p. 436. Order. Vitalis, p. 492. M. West. p. 221. W. Malm. p. 93. Ingulf, p. 68. Brompton, p. 957. Knygdon, p. 2339. H. Hunt. p. 210. Many of the historians say, that Harold was regularly elected by the states: Some, that Edward left him his successor by will.

C H A P. they were obliged to conceal their sentiments;
 III. and the new prince, taking a general silence for consent, and founding his title on the supposed suffrages of the people, which appeared unanimous, was, on the day immediately succeeding Edward's death, crowned and anointed King, by Aldred, archbishop of York. The whole nation seemed joyfully to acquiesce in his elevation.

THE first symptoms of danger, which the king discovered, came from abroad, and from his own brother, Tosti, who had submitted to a voluntary banishment in Flanders. Enraged at the successful ambition of Harold, to which he himself had fallen a victim, he filled the court of Baldwin with complaints of the injustice, which he had suffered: He engaged the interest of that family against his brother: He endeavoured to form intrigues with some of the discontented nobles in England: He sent his emissaries to Norway, in order to rouse to arms the free-booters of that kingdom, and to excite their hopes of reaping advantage from the unsettled state of affairs on the usurpation of the new king: And that he might render the combination more formidable, he made a journey to Normandy; in expectation that the duke, who had married Matilda, another daughter of Baldwin, would, in revenge of his own wrongs, as well as those of Tosti, second, by his counsels and forces, the projected invasion of England⁴⁴.

THE duke of Normandy, when he first received

⁴⁴ Order. Vitalis, p. 492.

intelligence of Harold's intrigues and accession, had been moved to the highest pitch of indignation; but that he might give the better colour to his pretensions, he sent an embassy to England, upbraiding that prince with his breach of faith, and summoning him to resign immediately the possession of the kingdom. Harold replied to the Norman ambassadors, that the oath, with which he was reproached, had been extorted by the well-grounded fear of violence, and could never for that reason, be regarded as obligatory: That he had had no commission, either from the late king or the states of England, who alone could dispose of the crown, to make any tender of the succession to the duke of Normandy; and if he, a private person, had assumed so much authority, and had even voluntarily sworn to support the duke's pretensions, the oath was unlawful, and it was his duty to seize the first opportunity of breaking it: That he had obtained the crown by the unanimous suffrages of the people; and should prove himself totally unworthy of their favour, did he not strenuously maintain those national liberties, with whose protection they had entrusted him: And that the duke, if he made any attempt by force of arms, should experience the power of an united nation, conducted by a prince, who, sensible of the obligations imposed on him by his royal dignity, was determined, that the same moment should put a period to his life and to his government⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ W. Malm. p. 99. Higden, p. 285. Matth. West. p. 222. De Gest. Angl. incerto auctore, p. 331.

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THIS answer was no other than William expected; and he had previously fixed his resolution of making an attempt upon England. Consulting only his courage, his resentment, and his ambition, he overlooked all the difficulties, inseparable from an attack on a great kingdom by such inferior force, and he saw only the circumstances, which would facilitate his enterprize. He considered, that England, ever since the accession of Canute, had enjoyed profound tranquillity, during a period of near fifty years; and it would require time for its soldiers, enervated by long peace, to learn discipline, and its generals experience. He knew, that it was entirely unprovided with fortified towns, by which it could prolong the war; but must venture its whole fortune in one decisive action against a veteran enemy, who, being once master of the field, would be in a condition to over-run the kingdom. He saw that Harold, though he had given proofs of vigour and bravery, had newly mounted a throne, which he had acquired by faction, from which he had excluded a very ancient royal family, and which was likely to totter under him by its own instability, much more if shaken by any violent external impulse. And he hoped, that the very circumstance of his crossing the sea, quitting his own country, and leaving himself no hopes of retreat; as it would astonish the enemy by the boldness of the enterprize, would inspirit his soldiers by despair, and rouse them to sustain the reputation of the Norman arms.

THE

THE Normans, as they had long been distinguished by valour among all the European nations, had at this time attained to the highest pitch of military glory. Besides acquiring by arms such a noble territory in France, besides defending it against continual attempts of the French monarch and all its neighbours, besides exerting many acts of vigour under their present sovereign; they had, about this very time, revived their ancient fame, by the most hazardous exploits, and the most wonderful successes, in the other extremity of Europe. A few Norman adventurers in Italy had acquired such an ascendant, not only over the Italians and Greeks, but the Germans and Saracens, that they expelled those foreigners, procured to themselves ample establishments, and laid the foundation of the opulent kingdom of Naples and Sicily⁵⁶. These enterprizes of men, who were all of them vassals in Normandy, many of them banished for faction and rebellion, excited the ambition of the haughty William; who disdained, after such examples of fortune and valour, to be deterred from making an attack on a neighbouring country, where he could be supported by the whole force of his principality.

THE situation also of Europe inspired William with hopes, that, besides his brave Normans, he might employ against England the flower of the military force, which was dispersed in all the neighbouring states. France, Germany, and the

⁵⁶ Gul. Gemet. lib. 7. cap. 30.

C H A P. Low Countries, by the progress of the feudal
III. institutions, were divided and subdivided into many principalities and baronies; and the possessors, enjoying the civil jurisdiction within themselves, as well as the right of arms, acted in many respects, as independent sovereigns, and maintained their properties and privileges, less by the authority of laws, than by their own force and valour. A military spirit had universally diffused itself throughout Europe; and the several leaders, whose minds were elevated by their princely situation, greedily embraced the most hazardous enterprizes, and being accustomed to nothing from their infancy but recitals of the success attending wars and battles, they were prompted by a natural ambition to imitate those adventures, which they heard so much celebrated, and which were so much exaggerated by the credulity of the age. United, however loosely, by their duty to one superior lord, and by their connexions with the great body of the community, to which they belonged, they desired to spread their fame each beyond his own district; and in all assemblies, whether instituted for civil deliberations, for military expeditions, or merely for show and entertainment, to outshine each other by the reputation of strength and prowess. Hence their genius for chivalry; hence their impatience of peace and tranquillity; and hence their readiness to embark in any dangerous enterprize, how little soever interested in its failure or success.

WILLIAM, by his power, his courage, and

his abilities, had long maintained a pre-eminence among those haughty chieftains; and every one who desired to signalize himself by his address in military exercises, or his valour in action, had been ambitious of acquiring a reputation in the court and in the armies of Normandy. Entertained with that hospitality and courtesy, which distinguished the age, they had formed attachments to the prince, and greedily attended to the prospects of the signal glory and elevation, which he promised them in return for their concurrence in an expedition against England. The more grandeur there appeared in the attempt, the more it suited their romantic spirit: The fame of the intended invasion was already diffused every where: Multitudes crowded to tender to the duke their service, with that of their vassals and retainers⁴⁷: And William found less difficulty in compleating his levies, than in chusing the most veteran forces, and in rejecting the offers of those, who were impatient to acquire fame under so renowned a leader.

BESIDES these advantages, which William owed to his personal valour and good conduct; he was indebted to fortune for procuring him some assistance, and also for removing many obstacles, which it was natural for him to expect in an undertaking, in which all his neighbours were so deeply interested. Conan, count of Brittany, was his mortal enemy: In order to throw a damp

⁴⁷ *Cul. Pictavenfis*, p. 198.

C H A P. III. upon the duke's enterprize, he chose this conjuncture for reviving his claim to Normandy itself; and he required, that, in case of William's success against England, the possession of that dutchy should devolve to him ¹⁸. But Conan died suddenly after making this demand; and Hoel, his successor, instead of adopting the malignity, or more properly speaking, the prudence of his predecessor, zealously seconded the duke's views, and sent his eldest son, Alain Fergant, to serve under him with a body of five thousand Bretons. The counts of Anjou and of Flanders encouraged their subjects to engage in the expedition; and even the court of France, though it might justly fear the aggrandizement of so dangerous a vassal, pursued not its interests on this occasion with sufficient vigour and resolution. Philip I. the reigning monarch, was a minor; and William, having communicated his project to the council, having desired assistance, and offered to do homage, in case of his success, for the crown of England, was indeed openly ordered to lay aside all thoughts of the enterprize; but the earl of Flanders, his father-in-law, being at the head of the regency, favoured under-hand his levies, and secretly encouraged the adventurous nobility to enlist under the standard of the duke of Normandy.

THE emperor, Henry IV. besides openly giving all his vassals permission to embark in this expedition, which so much engaged the attention of

¹⁸ Gul. Gemet. lib. 7. cap. 33.

Europe, promised his protection to the dutchy of Normandy during the absence of the prince, and thereby enabled him to employ his whole force in the invasion of England". But the most important ally, whom William gained by his negociations, was the pope, who had a mighty influence over the ancient barons, no less devout in their religious principles than valorous in their military enterprizes. The Roman pontiff, after an insensible progress during several ages of darkness and ignorance, began now to lift his head openly above all the princes of Europe; to assume the office of a mediator, or even an arbiter, in the quarrels of the greatest monarchs; to interpose in all secular affairs; and to obtrude his dictates as sovereign laws on his obsequious disciples. It was a sufficient motive to Alexander II. the reigning pope, for embracing William's quarrel, that he alone had made an appeal to his tribunal, and rendered him umpire of the dispute between him and Harold; but there were other advantages, which, that pontiff foresaw, must result from the conquest of England by the Norman arms. That kingdom, though at first converted by Romish missionaries, though it had afterwards advanced some farther steps towards subjection to Rome, maintained still a considerable independence in its ecclesiastical administration; and forming a world within itself, entirely separated from the rest of Europe, it had hitherto proved inaccessible to

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" Gul. Pict. p. 198.

E H A P. those exorbitant claims, which supported the
 III. grandeur of the papacy. Alexander, therefore, hoped, that the French and Norman barons, if successful in their enterprize, might import into that country a more devoted reverence to the holy see, and bring the English churches to a nearer conformity with those of the continent. He declared immediately in favour of William's claim; pronounced Harold a perjured usurper; denounced excommunication against him and his adherents; and the more to encourage the duke of Normandy in his enterprize, he sent him a consecrated banner, and a ring with one of St. Peter's hairs in it ⁶⁰. Thus were all the ambition and violence of that invasion covered over safely with the broad mantle of religion.

THE greatest difficulty, which William had to encounter in his preparations, arose from his own subjects in Normandy. The states of the dutchy were assembled at Lislebonne; and supplies being demanded for the intended enterprize, which promised so much glory and advantage to their country, there appeared a reluctance in many members, both to grant sums so much beyond the common measure of taxes in that age, and to set a precedent of performing their military service at a distance from their own country. The duke, finding it dangerous to solicit them in a body, conferred separately with the richest individuals in the province; and beginning with those

⁶⁰ Baker, p. 22. edit. 1684.

on whose affections he most relied, he gradually engaged all of them to advance the sums demanded. The count of Longueville seconded him in this negociation; as did the count of Mortaigne, Odo bishop of Baieux, and especially William Fitz-Osborne, count of Breteuil, and constable of the dutchy. Every person, when he himself was once engaged, endeavoured to bring over others; and at last the states themselves, after stipulating that this concession should be no precedent, voted, that they would assist their prince to the utmost in his intended enterprize ⁶¹.

WILLIAM had now assembled a fleet of 3000 vessels, great and small ⁶², and had selected an army of 60,000 men from among those numerous supplies, which from every quarter solicited to be received into his service. The camp bore a splendid, yet a martial appearance, from the discipline of the men, the beauty and vigour of the horses, the lustre of the arms, and the accoutrements of both; but above all, from the high names of nobility who engaged under the banners of the duke of Normandy. The most celebrated were Eustace, count of Boulogne, Aimeri de Thouars, Hugh d'Estaples, William d'Evreux, Geoffrey de Rotrou, Roger de Beaumont, William de Warenne, Roger de Montgomeri, Hugh de Grantmesnil, Charles

⁶¹ Camden. Introd. ad Britann. p. 212. 2d edit. Gibson Verftegan; p. 173.

⁶² Gul. Gemet. lib. 7. cap. 34.

C H A P. Martel, and Geoffrey⁶¹. To these bold chieftains
 III. William held up the spoils of England as the prize of their valour; and pointing to the opposite shore, called to them, that *there* was the field, on which they must erect trophies to their name, and fix their establishments.

WHILE he was making these mighty preparations, the duke, that he might increase the number of Harold's enemies, excited the inveterate rancour of Tosti, and encouraged him, in concert with Harold Halfager, king of Norway, to infest the coasts of England. Tosti, having collected about sixty vessels in the ports of Flanders, put to sea; and after committing some depredations on the south and east coasts, he sailed to Northumberland, and was there joined by Halfager, who came over with a great armament of three hundred sail. The combined fleets entered the Humber, and disembarked the troops, who began to extend their depredations on all sides; when Morcar earl of Northumberland, and Edwin earl of Mercia, the king's brother-in-law, having hastily collected some forces, ventured to give them battle. The action ended in the defeat and flight of these two noblemen.

HAROLD, informed of this defeat, hastened with an army to the protection of his people; and expressed the utmost ardour to show himself worthy of the crown, which had been conferred upon him. This prince, though he was not sensible

⁶¹ Odericus Vitalis, p. 501.

of the full extent of his danger, from the great combination against him, had employed every art of popularity to acquire the affections of the public; and he gave so many proofs of an equitable and prudent administration, that the English found no reason to repent the choice which they had made of a sovereign. They flocked from all quarters to join his standard; and as soon as he reached the enemy at Standford, he found himself in a condition to give them battle. The action was bloody; but the victory was decisive on the side of Harold, and ended in the total rout of the Norwegians, together with the death of Tosti and Halfager. Even the Norwegian fleet fell into the hands of Harold; who had the generosity to give prince Olave, the son of Halfager, his liberty, and allow him to depart with twenty vessels. But he had scarcely time to rejoice for this victory, when he received intelligence, that the duke of Normandy was landed with a great army in the south of England.

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25.

THE Norman fleet and army had been assembled, early in the summer, at the mouth of the small river Dive, and all the troops had been instantly embarked; but the winds proved long contrary, and detained them in that harbour. The authority, however, of the duke, the good discipline maintained among the seamen and soldiers, and the great care in supplying them with provisions, had prevented any disorder; when at last the wind became favourable, and enabled them to sail along the coast, till they reached St. Valori. There

C H A P. III. were, however, several vessels lost in this short passage; and as the wind again proved contrary, the army began to imagine, that heaven had declared against them, and that, notwithstanding the pope's benediction, they were destined to certain destruction. These bold warriors, who despised real dangers, were very subject to the dread of imaginary ones; and many of them began to mutiny, and even to desert their colours; when the duke, in order to support their drooping hopes, ordered a procession to be made with the reliques of St. Valori⁶⁴, and prayers to be said for more favourable weather. The wind instantly changed; and as this incident happened on the eve of the feast of St. Michael, the tutelar saint of Normandy, the soldiers, fancying they saw the hand of heaven in all these concurring circumstances, set out with the greatest alacrity: They met with no opposition on their passage: A great fleet, which Harold had assembled, and which had cruized all summer off the Isle of Wight, had been dismissed, on his receiving false intelligence, that William, discouraged by contrary winds and other accidents, had laid aside his preparations. The Norman armament, proceeding in great order, arrived, without any material loss, at Pevensey in Sussex; and the army quietly disembarked. The duke himself, as he leaped on shore, happened to stumble and fall; but had the presence of mind, it is said, to turn the

⁶⁴ Higden, p. 285. Order. Vitalis, p. 500. Matth. Paris, edit. Parisiis anno 1644. p. 2.

omen to his advantage, by calling aloud, that c H A P.
he had taken possession of the country. And a III.
soldier, running to a neighbouring cottage,
plucked some thatch, which, as if giving him
seizure of the kingdom, he presented to his general.
The joy and alacrity of William and his whole
army was so great, that they were nowise discour-
aged, even when they heard of Harold's great
victory over the Norwegians: They seemed rather
to wait with impatience the arrival of the enemy.

THE victory of Harold, though great and
honourable, had proved in the main prejudicial
to his interests, and may be regarded as the
immediate cause of his ruin. He lost many of
his bravest officers and soldiers in the action; and
he disgusted the rest, by refusing to distribute
the Norwegian spoils among them: A conduct
which was little agreeable to his usual generosity
of temper; but which his desire of sparing the
people, in the war that impended over him from
the duke of Normandy, had probably occasioned.
He hastened by quick marches to reach this new
invader; but though he was reinforced at London
and other places with fresh troops, he found
himself also weakened by the desertion of his
old soldiers; who from fatigue and discontent
secretly withdrew from their colours. His brother
Gurth, a man of bravery and conduct, began
to entertain apprehensions of the event; and
remonstrated with the king, that it would be
better policy to prolong the war, at least, to
spare his own person in the action. He urged to

C H A P. him, that the desperate situation of the duke of
 III. Normandy made it requisite for that prince to
 bring matters to a speedy decision, and put
 his whole fortune on the issue of a battle; but
 that the king of England, in his own country,
 beloved by his subjects, provided with every
 supply, had more certain and less dangerous
 means of ensuring to himself the victory: That
 the Norman troops, elated on the one hand
 with the highest hopes, and seeing, on the other,
 no resource in case of a discomfiture, would fight
 to the last extremity; and being the flower of all
 the warriors of the continent, must be regarded
 as formidable to the English: That if their first
 fire, which is always the most dangerous,
 were allowed to languish for want of action, if
 they were harassed with small skirmishes, straitened
 in provisions, and fatigued with the bad weather
 and deep roads during the winter-season, which
 was approaching, they must fall an easy and a
 bloodless prey to their enemy: That if a general
 action were delayed, the English, sensible of
 the imminent danger, to which their properties,
 as well as liberties, were exposed from those
 rapacious invaders, would hasten from all quarters
 to his assistance, and would render his army in-
 vincible: That, at least, if he thought it necessary
 to hazard a battle, he ought not to expose his
 own person; but reserve, in case of disastrous
 accidents, some resource to the liberty and in-
 dependence of the kingdom: And that having
 once been so unfortunate, as to be constrained

to swear, and that upon the holy reliques, to support the pretensions of the duke of Normandy, it were better that the command of the army should be entrusted to another, who, not being bound by those sacred ties, might give the soldiers more assured hopes of a prosperous issue to the combat.

H A R O L D was deaf to all these remonstrances: Elated with his past prosperity, as well as stimulated by his native courage, he resolved to give battle in person; and for that purpose, he drew near to the Normans, who had removed their camp and fleet to Hastings, where they fixed their quarters. He was so confident of success, that he sent a message to the duke, promising him a sum of money, if he would depart the kingdom without effusion of blood: But his offer was rejected with disdain; and William, not to be behind with his enemy in vaunting, sent him a message by some monks, requiring him either to resign the kingdom, or to hold it of him in fealty, or to submit their cause to the arbitration of the pope, or to fight him in single combat. Harold replied, that the God of battles would soon be the arbiter of all their differences⁶⁵.

T H E English and Normans now prepared themselves for this important decision; but the aspect of things, on the night before the battle, was very different in the two camps. The English spent the time in riot, and jollity, and disorder;

⁶⁵ Higden, p. 286.

C H A P. the Normans in silence, and in prayer, and in
 III. the other functions of their religion⁶⁶. On the morning, the duke called together the most considerable of his commanders, and made them a speech suitable to the occasion. He represented to them, that the event, which they and he had long wished for, was approaching; the whole fortune of the war now depended on their swords, and would be decided in a single action: That never army had greater motives for exerting a vigorous courage, whether they considered the prize which would attend their victory, or the inevitable destruction which must ensue upon their discomfiture: That if their martial and veteran bands could once break those raw soldiers, who had rashly dared to approach them, they conquered a kingdom at one blow, and were justly entitled to all its possessions as the reward of their prosperous valour: That, on the contrary, if they remitted in the least their wonted prowess, an enraged enemy hung upon their rear, the sea met them in their retreat, and an ignominious death was the certain punishment of their imprudent cowardice: That by collecting so numerous and brave a host, he had ensured every human means of conquest; and the commander of the enemy, by his criminal conduct, had given him just cause to hope for the favour of the Almighty, in whose hands alone lay the event of wars and battles: And that a perjured usurper, anathema-

⁶⁶ W. Malm. p. 101. De Gest. Angl. p. 332.

tized by the sovereign pontiff, and conscious of his own breach of faith, would be struck with terror on their appearance, and would prognosticate to himself that fate which his multiplied crimes had so justly merited⁶⁷. The duke next divided his army into three lines : The first, led by Montgomery, consisted of archers and light-armed infantry : The second, commanded by Martel, was composed of his bravest battalions, heavy armed, and ranged in close order : His cavalry, at whose head he placed himself, formed the third line, and were so disposed, that they stretched beyond the infantry, and flanked each wing of the army⁶⁸. He ordered the signal of battle to be given; and the whole army, moving at once, and singing the hymn or song of Roland, the famous peer of Charlemagne⁶⁹, advanced, in order and with alacrity, towards the enemy.

HAROLD had seized the advantage of a rising ground, and having likewise drawn some trenches to secure his flanks, he resolved to stand upon the defensive, and to avoid all action with the cavalry, in which he was inferior. The Kentish men were placed in the van; a post which they had always claimed as their due : The Londoners guarded the standard : And the king himself,

⁶⁷ H. Hunt. p. 368. Brompton, p. 959. Gul. Pict. p. 201.

⁶⁸ Gul. Pict. 201. Order. Vital. p. 501.

⁶⁹ W. Malm. p. 101. Higden, p. 286. Matth. West, p. 223. Du Cange's Glossary in verbo *Cantilena Rolandi*.

C H A P. III. accompanied by his two valiant brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, dismounting, placed himself at the head of his infantry, and expressed his resolution to conquer or to perish in the action. The first attack of the Normans was desperate, but was received with equal valour by the English; and after a furious combat, which remained long undecided, the former, overcome by the difficulty of the ground, and hard pressed by the enemy, began first to relax their vigour, then to retreat; and confusion was spreading among the ranks; when William, who found himself on the brink of destruction, hastened with a select band, to the relief of his dismayed forces. His presence restored the action; the English were obliged to retire with loss; and the duke ordering his second line to advance, renewed the attack with fresh forces and with redoubled courage. Finding, that the enemy, aided by the advantage of ground, and animated by the example of their prince, still made a vigorous resistance, he tried a stratagem, which was very delicate in its management, but which seemed advisable in his desperate situation, where, if he gained not a decisive victory, he was totally undone: He commanded his troops to make a hasty retreat, and to allure the enemy from their ground by the appearance of flight. The artifice succeeded against those unexperienced soldiers, who, heated by the action and sanguine in their hopes, precipitately followed the Normans into the plain. William gave orders, that at once the infantry should face about
 upon

upon their pursuers, and the cavalry make an assault upon their wings, and both of them pursue the advantage, which the surprize and terror of the enemy must give them in that critical and decisive moment. The English were repulsed with great slaughter, and driven back to the hill; where, being rallied by the bravery of Harold, they were able, notwithstanding their loss, to maintain the post and continue the combat. The duke tried the same stratagem a second time with the same success; but even after this double advantage, he still found a great body of the English, who, maintaining themselves in firm array, seemed determined to dispute the victory to the last extremity. He ordered his heavy armed infantry to make an assault upon them; while his archers, placed behind, should gall the enemy, who were exposed by the situation of the ground, and who were intent in defending themselves against the swords and spears of the assailants. By this disposition he at last prevailed: Harold was slain by an arrow, while he was combating with great bravery at the head of his men: His two brothers shared the same fate: And the English, discouraged by the fall of those princes, gave ground on all sides, and were pursued with great slaughter by the victorious Normans. A few troops however of the vanquished had still the courage to turn upon their pursuers; and attacking them in deep and miry ground, obtained some revenge for the slaughter and dishonour of the day. But

C H A P. the appearance of the duke obliged them to seek
 III. their safety by flight ; and darkness saved them
 from any farther pursuit by the enemy.

THUS was gained by William , duke of Normandy , the great and decisive victory of Hastings , after a battle which was fought from morning till sunset , and which seemed worthy , by the heroic valour displayed by both armies and by both commanders , to decide the fate of a mighty kingdom. William had three horses killed under him ; and there fell near fifteen thousand men on the side of the Normans : The loss was still more considerable on that of the vanquished ; besides the death of the king and his two brothers. The dead body of Harold was brought to William , and was generously restored without ransom to his mother. The Norman army left not the field of battle without giving thanks to heaven , in the most solemn manner , for their victory : And the prince having refreshed his troops , prepared to push to the utmost his advantage against the divided , dismayed , and discomfited English.

APPENDIX I.

The ANGLO-SAXON GOVERNMENT and MANNERS.

*First Saxon government — Succession of the Kings —
The Wittenagemot — The aristocracy — The
several orders of men — Courts of Justice —
Criminal law — Rules of proof — Military
force — Public revenue — Value of Money —
Manners.*

THE government of the Germans, and that of all the northern nations, who established themselves on the ruins of Rome, was always extremely free; and those fierce people, accustomed to independence and inured to arms, were more guided by persuasion than authority, in the submission which they paid to their princes. The military despotism, which had taken place in the Roman empire, and which, previously to the irruption of those conquerors, had sunk the genius of men, and destroyed every noble principle of science and virtue, was unable to resist the vigorous efforts of a free people; and Europe, as from a new epoch, rekindled her ancient spirit, and shook off the base servitude to arbitrary will and authority, under which she had so long laboured. The free constitutions then established, however impaired by the encroachments of succeeding princes,

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still preserve an air of independence and legal administration, which distinguished the European nations; and if that part of the globe maintain sentiments of liberty, honour, equity, and valour superior to the rest of mankind, it owes these advantages chiefly to the seeds implanted by those generous barbarians.

First Saxon
govern-
ment.

THE Saxons, who subdued Britain, as they enjoyed great liberty in their own country, obstinately retained that invaluable possession in their new settlement; and they imported into this island the same principles of independence, which they had inherited from their ancestors. The chieftains (for such they were, more properly than kings or princes) who commanded them in those military expeditions, still possessed a very limited authority; and as the Saxons exterminated, rather than subdued the ancient inhabitants, they were indeed transplanted into a new territory, but preserved unaltered all their civil and military institutions. The language was pure Saxon; even the names of places, which often remain while the tongue entirely changes, were almost all affixed by the conquerors; the manners and customs were wholly German; and the same picture of a fierce and bold liberty, which is drawn by the masterly pencil of Tacitus, will suit those founders of the English government. The king, so far from being invested with arbitrary power, was only considered as the first among the citizens; his authority depended more on his personal qualities than on his station; he was

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even so far on a level with the people, that a stated price was fixed for his head, and a legal fine was levied upon his murderer, which, though proportionate to his station, and superior to that paid for the life of a subject, was a sensible mark of his subordination to the community.

It is easy to imagine, that an independent people, so little restrained by law, and cultivated by science, would not be very strict in maintaining a regular succession of their princes. Though they paid great regard to the royal family, and ascribed to it an undisputed superiority, they either had no rule, or none that was steadily observed, in filling the vacant throne; and present convenience, in that emergency, was more attended to than general principles. We are not however to suppose, that the crown was considered as altogether elective; and that a regular plan was traced by the constitution for supplying, by the suffrages of the people, every vacancy made by the demise of the first magistrate. If any king left a son of an age and capacity fit for government, the young prince naturally stepped into the throne: If he was a minor, his uncle, or the next prince of the blood, was promoted to the government, and left the sceptre to his posterity: Any sovereign, by taking previous measures with the leading men, had it greatly in his power to appoint his successor: All these changes, and indeed the ordinary administration of government, required the express concurrence, or at least the tacit acquiescence of the people; but

Succession
of the kings.

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possession, however obtained, was extremely apt to secure their obedience, and the idea of any right, which was once excluded, was but feeble and imperfect. This is so much the case in all barbarous monarchies, and occurs so often in the history of the Anglo-Saxons, that we cannot consistently entertain any other notion of their government. The idea of an hereditary succession in authority is so natural to men, and is so much fortified by the usual rule in transmitting private possessions, that it must retain a great influence on every society, which does not exclude it by the refinements of a republican constitution. But as there is a material difference between government and private possessions, and every man is not as much qualified for exercising the one, as for enjoying the other, a people, who are not sensible of the general advantages attending a fixed rule, are apt to make great leaps in the succession, and frequently to pass over the person, who, had he possessed the requisite years and abilities, would have been thought entitled to the sovereignty. Thus, these monarchies are not, strictly speaking, either elective or hereditary; and though the destination of a prince may often be followed in appointing his successor, they can as little be regarded as wholly testamentary. The states by their suffrage may sometimes establish a sovereign; but they more frequently recognize the person, whom they find established: A few great men take the lead; the people, overawed and influenced, acquiesce in the

government; and the reigning prince, provided he be of the royal family, passes undisputedly for the legal fovereign.

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It is confessed, that our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon history and antiquities is too imperfect to afford us means of determining with certainty all the prerogatives of the crown and privileges of the people, or of giving an exact delineation of that government. It is probable also, that the constitution might be somewhat different in the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and that it changed considerably during the course of six centuries, which elapsed from the first invasion of the Saxons till the Norman conquest¹. But most of these differences and changes, with their causes and effects, are unknown to us: It only appears, that, at all times, and in all the kingdoms, there was a national council, called a Wittenagemot or assembly of the wise men, (for that is the import of the term) whose consent was requisite for enacting laws, and for ratifying the chief

The Witte-
nagemot.

¹ We know of one change, not inconsiderable in the Saxon constitution. The Saxon Annals, p. 49. inform us, that it was in early times the prerogative of the king to name the dukes, earls, aldermen and sheriffs of the counties. After, a contemporary writer, informs us, that Alfred deposed all the ignorant aldermen, and appointed men of more capacity in their place: Yet the laws of Edward the Confessor, §. 35. say expressly, that the heretoghs or dukes, and the sheriffs were chosen by the freeholders in the folkmote, a county-court, which was assembled once a-year, and where all the freeholders swore allegiance to the king.

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acts of public administration. The preambles to all the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, Alfred, Edward the Elder, Athelstan, Edmond, Edgar, Ethelred, and Edward the Confessor; even those to the laws of Canute, though a kind of conqueror, put this matter beyond controversy, and carry proofs every where of a limited and legal government. But who were the constituent members of this Wittenagemot has not been determined with certainty by antiquaries. It is agreed, that the bishops and abbots² were an essential part; and it is also evident, from the tenor of those ancient laws, that the Wittenagemot enacted statutes which regulated the ecclesiastical as well as civil government, and that those dangerous principles, by which the church is totally severed from the state, were hitherto unknown to the Anglo-Saxons³. It also appears, that the aldermen or governors of counties, who, after the Danish times, were often called earls⁴, were admitted into this council, and gave their consent to the public statutes. But besides the prelates and aldermen, there is also mention of the wites or wise-men, as a component part of the Wittenagemot; but who *these* were, is not so clearly ascertained by the laws or the history of that

² Sometimes abbesses were admitted; at least, they often sign the king's charters or grants. Spellm. Gloss. in verbo *parliamentum*.

³ Wilkins, passim.

⁴ See note [G] at the end of the volume.

period. The matter would probably be of difficult discussion, even were it examined impartially; but as our modern parties have chosen to divide on this point, the question has been disputed with the greater obstinacy, and the arguments on both sides have become, on that account, the more captious and deceitful. Our monarchical faction maintain, that these *wites* or *sapientes* were the judges, or men learned in the law: The popular faction assert them to be representatives of the boroughs, or what we now call the commons.

THE expressions, employed by all ancient historians in mentioning the Wittenagemot, seem to contradict the latter supposition. The members are almost always called the *principes*, *satrapæ*, *optimates*, *magnates*, *proceres*; terms which seem to suppose an aristocracy, and to exclude the commons. The boroughs also, from the low state of commerce, were so small and so poor, and the inhabitants lived in such dependence on the great men⁵, that it seems nowise probable they would be admitted as a part of the national councils. The commons are well known to have had no share in the governments established by the Franks, Burgundians, and other northern nations; and we may conclude, that the Saxons, who remained longer barbarous and uncivilized than those tribes, would never think of conferring such an extraordinary

⁵ Brady's treatise of English boroughs, p. 3, 4, 5, etc.

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privilege on trade and industry. The military profession alone was honourable among all those conquerors : The warriors subsisted by their possessions in land : They became considerable by their influence over their vassals, retainers, tenants, and slaves : And it requires strong proof to convince us that they would admit any of a rank so much inferior as the burghesses, to share with them in the legislative authority. Tacitus indeed affirms, that, among the ancient Germans, the consent of all the members of the community was required in every important deliberation ; but he speaks not of representatives ; and this ancient practice, mentioned by the Roman historian, could only have place in small tribes, where every citizen might without inconvenience be assembled upon any extraordinary emergency. After principalities became extensive ; after the difference of property had formed distinctions more important than those which arose from personal strength and valour ; we may conclude, that the national assemblies must have been more limited in their number, and composed only of the more considerable citizens.

BUT though we must exclude the burghesses or commons from the Saxon Wittenagemot, there is some necessity for supposing, that this assembly consisted of other members than the prelates, abbots, aldermen, and the judges or privy council. For as all these, excepting some of the ecclesiastics⁶, were anciently appointed by

⁶ There is some reason to think, that the bishops were

the king, had there been no other legislative authority, the royal power had been in a great measure absolute, contrary to the tenor of all the historians, and to the practice of all the northern nations. We may, therefore, conclude, that the more considerable proprietors of land were, without any election, constituent members of the national assembly: There is reason to think, that forty hides, or between four and five thousand acres, was the estate requisite for entitling the possessor to this honourable privilege. We find a passage in an ancient author² by which it appears, that a person of very noble birth, even one allied to the crown, was not esteemed a *princeps* (the term usually employed by ancient historians when the Wittenagemot is mentioned) till he had acquired a fortune of that amount. Nor need we imagine, that the public council would become disorderly or confused by admitting so great a multitude. The landed property of England was probably in few hands during the Saxon times; at least, during the latter part of that period: And as men had

sometimes chosen by the Wittenagemot, and confirmed by the king. Eddius, cap. 2. The abbots in the monasteries of royal foundation were anciently named by the king; though Edgar gave the monks the election, and only reserved to himself the ratification. This destination was afterwards frequently violated; and the abbots as well as bishops were afterwards all appointed by the king; as we learn from Ingulf, a writer contemporary to the conquest.

² Hist. Eliensis, lib. 2. cap. 40.

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hardly any ambition to attend those public councils, there was no danger of the assembly's becoming too numerous for the dispatch of the little business, which was brought before them.

The Aristocracy.

It is certain, that, whatever we may determine concerning the constituent members of the Wittenagemot, in whom, with the king, the legislature resided, the Anglo-Saxon government, in the period preceding the Norman conquest, was become extremely aristocratical: The royal authority was very limited; the people, even if admitted to that assembly, were of little or no weight and consideration. We have hints given us in historians of the great power and riches of particular noblemen: And it could not but happen, after the abolition of the Heptarchy, when the king lived at a distance from the provinces, that those great proprietors, who resided on their estates, would much augment their authority over their vassals and retainers, and over all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood. Hence the immeasurable power assumed by Harold, Godwin, Leofric, Siward, Morcar, Edwin, Eadric, and Alfric, who controlled the authority of the kings and rendered themselves quite necessary in the government. The two latter, though detested by the people, on account of their joining a foreign enemy, still preserved their power and influence; and we may therefore conclude, that their authority was founded, not on popularity, but on family-rights and possessions. There is one Athelstan,

mentioned in the reign of the king of that name, who is called alderman of all England, and is said to be half-king; though the monarch himself was a prince of valour and abilities⁸. And we find, that in the later Saxon times, and in these alone, the great offices went from father to son, and became, in a manner, hereditary in the families⁹.

THE circumstances, attending the invasions of the Danes, would also serve much to increase the power of the principal nobility. Those freebooters made unexpected inroads on all quarters; and there was a necessity, that each county should resist them by its own force, and under the conduct of its own nobility and its own magistrates. For the same reason, that a general war, managed by the united efforts of the whole state, commonly augments the power of the crown; those private wars and inroads turned to the advantage of the aldermen and nobles.

AMONG that military and turbulent people, so averse to commerce and the arts, and so little

⁸ Hist. Ramef. § 3. p. 387.

⁹ Roger Hoveden, giving the reason why William the Conqueror made Cospatric earl of Northumberland, says, *Nam ex materno sanguine attinebat ad eum honor illius comitatus. Erat enim ex matre Algitba, filia Uthredi comitis.* See also Sim. Dun. p. 205. We see in those instances, the same tendency towards rendering offices hereditary, which took place, during a more early period, on the continent; and which had already produced there its full effect.

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inured to industry, justice was commonly very ill administered, and great oppression and violence seem to have prevailed. These disorders would be increased by the exorbitant power of the aristocracy; and would, in their turn, contribute to increase it. Men, not daring to rely on the guardianship of the laws, were obliged to devote themselves to the service of some chieftain, whose orders they followed even to the disturbance of the government or the injury of their fellow-citizens, and who afforded them in return protection from any insult or injustice by strangers. Hence we find, by the extracts which Dr. Brady has given us from Domesday-book, that almost all the inhabitants even of towns, had placed themselves under the clientship of some particular nobleman, whose patronage they purchased by annual payments, and whom they were obliged to consider as their sovereign, more than the king himself, or even the legislature¹⁰. A client, though a freeman, was supposed so much to belong to his patron, that his murderer was obliged by law to pay a fine to the latter, as a compensation for his loss; in like manner as he paid a fine to the master for the murder of his slave¹¹. Men, who were of a more considerable rank, but not powerful enough, each to support himself by his

¹⁰ Brady's treatise of boroughs, p. 3, 4, 5, etc. The case was the same with the freemen in the country. See pref. to his hist. p. 8, 9, 10, etc.

¹¹ LL. Edw. Conf. § 8. apud Ingulf.

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own independent authority, entered into formal confederacies with each other, and composed a kind of separate community, which rendered itself formidable to all aggressors. Dr. Hickes has preserved a curious Saxon bond of this kind, which he calls a *Sodalitium*, and which contains many particulars characteristical of the manners and customs of the times¹². All the associates are there said to be gentlemen of Cambridgeshire; and they swear before the holy reliques to observe their confederacy, and to be faithful to each other: They promise to bury any of the associates who dies, in whatever place he had appointed; to contribute to his funeral charges; and to attend at his interment; and whoever is wanting in this last duty, binds himself to pay a measure of honey. When any of the associates is in danger, and calls for the assistance of his fellows, they promise, besides flying to his succour, to give information to the sheriff; and if he be negligent in protecting the person exposed to danger, they engage to levy a fine of one pound upon him: If the president of the society himself be wanting in this particular, he binds himself to pay one pound; unless he has the reasonable excuse of sickness, or of duty to his superior. When any of the associates is murdered, they are to exact eight pounds from the murderer; and if he refuse to pay it, they are to prosecute him for the sum at their joint expence. If any of the associates,

¹² Dissert. Epist. p. 21.

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who happens to be poor, kill a man, the society are to contribute by a certain proportion to pay his fine: A mark a piece, if the fine be 700 shillings; less if the person killed be a clown or ceorle; the half of that sum, again, if he be a Welshman. But, where any of the associates kills a man, wilfully and without provocation, he must himself pay the fine. If any of the associates kill any of his fellows, in a like criminal manner, besides paying the usual fine to the relations of the deceased, he must pay eight pounds to the society, or renounce the benefit of it: In which case they bind themselves, under the penalty of one pound, never to eat or drink with him, except in the presence of the king, bishop, or alderman. There are other regulations to protect themselves and their servants from all injuries, to revenge such as are committed, and to prevent their giving abusive language to each other; and the fine, which they engage to pay for this last offence, is a measure of honey.

It is not to be doubted, but a confederacy of this kind must have been a great source of friendship and attachment; when men lived in perpetual danger from enemies, robbers, and oppressors, and received protection chiefly from their personal valour, and from the assistance of their friends or patrons. As animosities were then more violent, connexions were also more intimate, whether voluntary or derived from blood: The most remote degree of propinquity was regarded: An indelible memory of benefits was preserved

preserved: Severe vengeance was taken for injuries, both from a point of honour, and as the best means of future security: And the civil union being weak, many private engagements were contracted, in order to supply its place, and to procure men that safety, which the laws and their own innocence were not alone able to insure to them.

On the whole, notwithstanding the seeming liberty or rather licentiousness of the Anglo-Saxons, the great body even of the free citizens, in those ages, really enjoyed much less true liberty, than where the execution of the laws is the most severe, and where subjects are reduced to the strictest subordination and dependence on the civil magistrate. The reason is derived from the excess itself of that liberty. Men must guard themselves at any price against insults and injuries; and where they receive not protection from the laws and magistrate, they will seek it by submission to superiors, and by herding in some private confederacy, which acts under the direction of a powerful leader. And thus all anarchy is the immediate cause of tyranny, if not over the state, at least over many of the individuals.

SECURITY was provided by the Saxon laws to all members of the Wittenagemot, both in going and returning, *except they were notorious thieves and robbers.*

THE German Saxons, as the other nations of that continent, were divided into three ranks The several orders of men.

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of men, the noble, the free, and the slaves¹³. This distinction they brought over with them into Britain.

THE nobles were called thanes; and were of two kinds, the king's thanes and lesser thanes. The latter seem to have been dependent on the former; and to have received lands, for which they paid rent, services, or attendance in peace and war¹⁴. We know of no title, which raised any one to the rank of thane, except noble birth and the possession of land. The former was always much regarded by all the German nations even in their most barbarous state; and as the Saxon nobility, having little credit, could scarcely burthen their estates with much debt, and as the commons had little trade or industry by which they could accumulate riches, these two ranks of men, even though they were not separated by positive laws, might remain long distinct, and the noble families continue many ages in opulence and splendour. There were no middle rank of men, that could gradually mix with their superiors, and insensibly procure to themselves honour and distinction. If by any extraordinary accident, a mean person acquired riches, a circumstance so singular made him be known and remarked; he became the object of envy, as well as of indignation, to all the nobles; he would have great difficulty to defend what he had acquired; and

¹³ Nithard. Hist. lib. 4.

¹⁴ Spellm. Feuds and Tenures, p. 40.

he would find it impossible to protect himself from oppression, except by courting the patronage of some great chieftain; and paying a large price for his safety.

THERE are two statutes among the Saxon laws, which seem calculated to confound those different ranks of men; that of Athelstan, by which a merchant, who had made three long sea-voyages on his own account, was entitled to the quality of thane¹⁵; and that of the same prince, by which a ceorle or husbandman, who had been able to purchase five hides of land, and had a chapel, a kitchen, a hall, and a bell, was raised to the same distinction¹⁶. But the opportunities were so few, by which a merchant or ceorle could thus exalt himself above his rank, that the law could never overcome the reigning prejudices; the distinction between noble and base blood would still be indelible; and the well-born thanes would entertain the highest contempt for those legal and factitious ones. Though we are not informed of any of these circumstances by ancient historians, they are so much founded on the nature of things, that we may admit them as a necessary and infallible consequence of the situation of the kingdom during those ages.

¹⁵ Wilkins, p. 71.

¹⁶ Selden, Titles of honour, p. 515. Wilkins, p. 70.

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THE cities appear by Domesday-book to have been at the conquest little better than villages ¹⁷. York itself, though it was always the second, at least the third ¹⁸ city in England, and was the capital of a great province, which never was thoroughly united with the rest, contained then but 1418 families ¹⁹. Malmesbury tells us ²⁰, that the great distinction between the Anglo-Saxon nobility and the French or Norman, was that the latter built magnificent and stately castles; whereas the former consumed their immense fortunes in riot and hospitality, and in mean houses. We may thence infer, that the arts in general were much less advanced in England than in France; a greater number of idle servants and retainers lived about the great families; and as these, even in France, were powerful enough

¹⁷ Winchester, being the capital of the West-Saxon monarchy, was anciently a considerable city. Gul. Pict. p. 210.

¹⁸ Norwich contained 738 houses, Exeter, 315, Ipswich, 538, Northampton, 60, Hertford, 146, Canterbury, 262, Bath, 64, Southampton, 84, Warwick, 225. See Brady of Boroughs, p. 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. These are the most considerable he mentions. The account of them is extracted from Domesday-book.

¹⁹ Brady's treatise of boroughs, p. 10. There were six wards, besides the archbishop's palace; and five of these wards contained the number of families here mentioned, which at the rate of five persons to a family makes about 7000 souls. The sixth ward was laid waste.

²⁰ P. 102. See also de Gest. Angl. p. 333.

to disturb the execution of the laws, we may judge of the authority, acquired by the aristocracy in England. When earl Godwin besieged the Confessor in London, he summoned from all parts his huscarles, or houseceorles and retainers, and thereby constrained his sovereign to accept of the conditions, which he was pleased to impose upon him. Appendix
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THE lower rank of freemen were denominated ceorles among the Anglo-Saxons; and where they were industrious, they were chiefly employed in husbandry: Whence a ceorle, and a husbandman, became in a manner synonymous terms. They cultivated the farms of the nobility or thanes for which they paid rent: and they seem to have been removeable at pleasure. For there is little mention of leases among the Anglo-Saxons: The pride of the nobility, together with the general ignorance of writing, must have rendered those contracts very rare, and must have kept the husbandmen in a dependent condition. The rents of farms were then chiefly paid in kind²¹.

BUT the most numerous rank by far in the community seems to have been the slaves or villains, who were the property of their lords, and were consequently incapable, themselves, of possessing any property. Dr. Brady assures us, from a survey of Domesday-book²², that, in

²¹ LL. Inæ. § 70. These laws fixed the rents for a hide; but it is difficult to convert it into modern measures.

²² General preface to his hist. p. 7, 8, 9, etc.

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all the counties of England, the far greater part of the land was occupied by them, and that the husbandmen, and still more the socmen, who were tenants that could not be removed at pleasure, were very few in comparison. This was not the case with the German nations, as far as we can collect from the account given us by Tacitus. The perpetual wars in the Heptarchy, and the depredations of the Danes, seem to have been the cause of this great alteration with the Anglo-Saxons. Prisoners taken in battle, or carried off in the frequent inroads, were then reduced to slavery; and became, by right of war²³, entirely at the disposal of their lords. Great property in the nobles, especially if joined to an irregular administration of justice, naturally favours the power of the aristocracy; but still more so, if the practice of slavery be admitted, and has become very common. The nobility not only possess the influence which always attends riches, but also the power which the laws give them over their slaves and villains. It then becomes difficult, and almost impossible, for a private man to remain altogether free and independent.

THERE were two kinds of slaves among the Anglo-Saxons; household slaves, after the manner of the ancients, and prædial or rustic, after the manner of the Germans²⁴. These latter resembled

²³ LL. Edg. § 14. apud Spellm. Conc. vol. i. p. 471.

²⁴ Spellm. Gloss. in verb. *Servus*.

the serfs, which are at present to be met with in Poland, Denmark, and some parts of Germany. The power of a master over his slaves was not unlimited among the Anglo-Saxons, as it was among their ancestors. If a man beat out his slave's eye or teeth, the slave recovered his liberty²⁵: If he killed him, he paid a fine to the king; provided the slave died within a day after the wound or blow: Otherwise it passed unpunished²⁶. The selling of themselves or children to slavery was always the practice among the German nations²⁷, and was continued by the Anglo-Saxons²⁸.

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THE great lords and abbots among the Anglo-Saxons possessed a criminal jurisdiction within their territories, and could punish without appeal any thieves or robbers whom they caught there²⁹. This institution must have had a very contrary effect to that which was intended, and must have procured robbers a sure protection on the lands of such noblemen as did not sincerely mean to discourage crimes and violence.

BUT though the general strain of the Anglo-Saxon government seems to have become aristocratical, there were still considerable remains of

Courts of
justice.

²⁵ LL. Ælf. § 20.

²⁶ Ibid. § 17.

²⁷ Tacit. de morib. Germ.

²⁸ LL. Inæ, § 11. LL. Ælf. § 12.

²⁹ Higden, lib. 1. cap. 50. LL. Edw. Conf. §. 26. Spellm. Conc. vol. 1. p. 415. Gloss. in verb. *Haligemot* et *Infangenthefe*.

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the ancient democracy, which were not indeed sufficient to protect the lowest of the people, without the patronage of some great lord, but might give security, and even some degree of dignity, to the gentry, or inferior nobility. The administration of justice, in particular, by the courts of the Decennary, the Hundred, and the County, was well calculated to defend general liberty, and to restrain the power of the nobles. In the county-courts or shire-motes, all the freeholders were assembled twice a-year, and received appeals from the inferior courts. They there decided all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil; and the bishop, together with the alderman or earl, presided over them³⁰. The affair was determined in a summary manner, without much pleading, formality, or delay, by a majority of voices; and the bishop and alderman had no further authority than to keep order among the freeholders, and interpose with their opinion³¹. Where justice was denied during three sessions by the Hundred, and then by the County-court, there lay an appeal to the king's court³²; but this was not practised on slight occasions. The aldermen received a third of the fines

³⁰ LL. Edg. § 5. Wilkins, p. 78. LL. Canut. §. 17. Wilkins, p. 136.

³¹ Hicke, Dissert. Epist. p. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

³² LL. Edg. § 2. Wilkins, p. 77. LL. Canut. § 18. apud Wilkins, p. 136.

levied in those courts ³³; and as most of the punishments were then pecuniary, this perquisite formed a considerable part of the profits belonging to his office. The two thirds also, which went to the king, made no contemptible part of the public revenue. Any freeholder was fined who absented himself thrice from these courts ³⁴.

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As the extreme ignorance of the age made deeds and writings very rare, the County or Hundred court was the place where the most remarkable civil transactions were finished, in order to preserve the memory of them, and prevent all future disputes. Here testaments were promulgated, slaves manumitted, bargains of sale concluded; and sometimes, for greater security, the most considerable of these deeds were inserted in the blank leaves of the parish Bible, which thus became a kind of register, too sacred to be falsified. It was not unusual to add to the deed an imprecation on all such as should be guilty of that crime ³⁵.

AMONG a people, who lived in so simple a manner as the Anglo-Saxons, the judicial power is always of greater importance than the legislative. There were few or no taxes imposed by the states: There were few statutes enacted, and the nation was less governed by laws, than by customs, which admitted a great latitude of

³³ LL. Edw. Conf. § 31.

³⁴ LL. Ethelst. 20.

³⁵ Hickes, Dissert. Epist.

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interpretation. Though it should, therefore, be allowed, that the Wittenagemot was altogether composed of the principal nobility, the county-courts, where all the free-holders were admitted, and which regulated all the daily occurrences of life, formed a wide basis for the government, and were no contemptible checks on the aristocracy. But there is another power still more important than either the judicial or legislative; to wit, the power of injuring or serving by immediate force and violence, for which it is difficult to obtain redress in courts of justice. In all extensive governments, where the execution of the laws is feeble, this power naturally falls into the hands of the principal nobility; and the degree of it which prevails, cannot be determined so much by the public statutes, as by small incidents in history, by particular customs, and sometimes by the reason and nature of things. The Highlands of Scotland have long been entitled by law to every privilege of British subjects; but it was not till very lately that the common people could in fact enjoy these privileges.

THE powers of all the members of the Anglo-Saxon government are disputed among historians and antiquaries: The extreme obscurity of the subject, even though faction had never entered into the question, would naturally have begotten those controversies. But the great influence of the lords over their slaves and tenants, the clientship of the burghers, the total want of a middling rank of men, the extent of the monarchy,

the loose execution of the laws, the continued disorders and convulsions of the state; all these circumstances evince, that the Anglo-Saxon government became at last extremely aristocratical; and the events, during the period immediately preceding the conquest, confirm this inference or conjecture.

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BOTH the punishments inflicted by the Anglo-Saxon courts of judicature, and the methods of proof employed in all causes, appear somewhat singular, and are very different from those which prevail at present among all civilized nations.

Criminal
law.

WE must conceive, that the ancient Germans were little removed from the original state of nature: The social confederacy among them was more martial than civil: They had chiefly in view the means of attack or defence against public enemies, not those of protection against their fellow-citizens: Their possessions were so slender and so equal, that they were not exposed to great danger; and the natural bravery of the people made every man trust to himself and to his particular friends for his defence or vengeance. This defect in the political union drew much closer the knot of particular confederacies: An insult upon any man was regarded by all his relations and associates as a common injury: They were bound by honour, as well as by a sense of common interest, to revenge his death, or any violence which he had suffered: They retaliated on the aggressor by like acts of violence; and if he were protected, as was natural and usual,

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1. by his own clan, the quarrel was spread still wider, and bred endless disorders in the nation.

THE Frisians, a tribe of the Germans, had never advanced beyond this wild and imperfect state of society; and the right of private revenge still remained among them unlimited and uncontrolled³⁶. But the other German nations, in the age of Tacitus, had made one step farther towards completing the political or civil union. Though it still continued to be an indispensable point of honour for every clan to revenge the death or injury of a member, the magistrate had acquired a right of interposing in the quarrel, and of accommodating the difference. He obliged the person maimed or injured, and the relations of one killed, to accept of a present from the aggressor and his relations³⁷, as a compensation for the injury³⁸, and to drop all farther prosecution of revenge. That the accommodation of one quarrel might not be the source of more, this present was fixed and certain, according to the rank of the person killed or injured, and was commonly paid in cattle, the chief property of those rude and uncultivated nations. A present of this kind gratified the revenge of the injured family by the loss which the aggressor suffered: It satisfied their pride by the submission which it expressed: It diminished their regret for the loss

³⁶ LL. Fris. tit. 2. apud Lindenbrog. p. 491.

³⁷ LL. Æthelb. § 23. LL. Ælf. § 27.

³⁸ Called by the Saxons *mægбота*.

or injury of a kinsman by their acquisition of new property: And thus general peace was for a moment restored to the society ³⁹. Appendix
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BUT when the German nations had been settled some time in the provinces of the Roman empire, they made still another step towards a more cultivated life, and their criminal justice gradually improved and refined itself. The magistrate, whose office it was to guard public peace and to suppress private animosities, conceived himself to be injured by every injury done to any of his people; and besides the compensation to the person who suffered, or to his family, he thought himself entitled to exact a fine, called the *Fritwit*, as an atonement for the breach of peace, and as a reward for the pains which he had taken in accommodating the quarrel. When this idea, which is so natural, was once suggested, it was willingly received both by sovereign and people. The numerous fines which were levied, augmented the revenue of the king: And the people were sensible, that he would be more vigilant in interposing with his good offices, when he reaped such immediate advantage from them; and that injuries would be less frequent, when, besides compensation to the person injured, they were exposed to this additional penalty ⁴⁰.

³⁹ Tacit de morib. Germ. The author says, that the price of the composition was fixed; which must have been by the laws and the interposition of the magistrates.

⁴⁰ Besides paying money to the relations of the deceased and to the king, the murderer was also obliged to pay the

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THIS short abstract contains the history of the criminal jurisprudence of the northern nations for several centuries. The state of England in this particular, during the period of the Anglo-Saxons, may be judged of by the collection of ancient laws, published by Lambard and Wilkins. The chief purport of these laws is not to prevent or entirely suppress private quarrels, which the legislator knew to be impossible, but only to regulate and moderate them. The laws of Alfred enjoin, that, if any one know, that his enemy or aggressor, after doing him an injury, resolves to keep within his own house *and his own lands*⁴¹, he shall not fight him, till he require compensation for the injury. If he be strong enough to besiege him in his house, he may do it for seven days without attacking him; and if the aggressor be willing, during that time, to surrender himself and his arms, his adversary must detain him thirty days, but is afterwards obliged to restore him save to his kindred, *and be content with the compensation*. If the criminal fly to the temple, that sanctuary must not be violated. Where the assailant has not force sufficient to besiege the criminal in his house, he must apply to the alderman for assistance; and if the alderman refuse

master of a slave or vassal a sum as a compensation for his loss. This was called the *Manbote*. See Spell. Gloss. in verb. *Fredum*, *Manbot*.

⁴¹ The addition of these last words in Italics appears necessary from what follows in the same law.

aid, the assailant must have recourse to the king: And he is not allowed to assault the house, till after this supreme magistrate has refused assistance. If any one meet with his enemy, and be ignorant that he was resolved to keep within his own lands, he must, before he attack him, require him, to surrender himself prisoner, and deliver up his arms; in which case he may detain him thirty days: But if he refuse to deliver up his arms, it is then lawful to fight him. A slave may fight in his master's quarrel: A father may fight in his son's with any one, except with his master⁴².

It was enacted by king Ina, that no man should take revenge for an injury till he had first demanded compensation, and had been refused it⁴³.

KING Edmond, in the preamble to his laws, mentions the general misery, occasioned by the multiplicity of private feuds and battles; and he establishes several expedients for remedying this grievance. He ordains, that, if any one commit murder, he may, with the assistance of his kindred, pay within a twelvemonth the fine of his crime; and if they abandon him, he shall alone sustain the deadly feud or quarrel with the kindred of the murdered person: His own kindred are free from the feud, but on condition that they neither converse with the criminal, nor supply him with meat *or other necessaries*: If any

⁴² LL. Ælfr. § 28. Wilkins, p. 43.

⁴³ LL. Inæ, § 9.

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of them, after renouncing him, receive him into their house, *or give him assistance*, they are finable to the king, and are involved in the feud. If the kindred of the murdered person take revenge on any but the criminal himself, *after he is abandoned by his kindred*, all their property is forfeited, and they are declared to be enemies to the king and all his friends⁴⁴. It is also ordained, that the fine for murder shall never be remitted by the king⁴⁵, and that no criminal shall be killed who flies to the church, or any of the king's towns⁴⁶; and the king himself declares, that his house shall give no protection to murderers, till they have satisfied the church by their penance, and the kindred of the deceased, by making compensation⁴⁷. The method appointed for transacting this composition is found in the same law⁴⁸.

THESE attempts of Edmond, to contract and diminish the feuds, were contrary to the ancient spirit of the northern barbarians, and were a step towards a more regular administration of justice. By the Salic law, any man might, by a public declaration, exempt himself from his family quarrels: But then he was considered by the law as no longer belonging to the family;

⁴⁴ LL. Edm. § 1. Wilkins, p. 73.

⁴⁵ LL. Edm. § 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid. § 2.

⁴⁷ Ibid. § 4.

⁴⁸ Ibid. § 7.

and

and he was deprived of all right of succession, as the punishment of his cowardice⁴⁹.

THE price of the king's head, or his weregild, as it was then called, was by law 30,000 thrimfas, near 1300 pounds of present money. The price of the prince's head was 15,000 thrimfas; that of a bishop's or alderman's 8000; a sheriff's 4000; a thane's or clergyman's 2000; a ceorle's 266. These prices were fixed by the laws of the Angles. By the Mercian law, the price of a ceorle's head was 200 shillings; that of a thane's six times as much; that of a king's six times more⁵⁰. By the laws of Kent, the price of the archbishop's head was higher than that of the king's⁵¹. Such respect was then paid to the ecclesiastics! It must be understood, that, where a person was unable or unwilling to pay the fine, he was put out of the protection of law, and the kindred of the deceased had liberty to punish him as they thought proper.

SOME antiquaries⁵² have thought, that these compensations were only given for man-slaughter, not for wilful murder: But no such distinction appears in the laws; and it is contradicted by the practice of all the other barbarous nations⁵³, by that of the ancient Germans⁵⁴, and by that

⁴⁹ Tit. 63.

⁵⁰ Wilkins, p. 71, 72.

⁵¹ LL. Elthredi, apud Wilkins, p. 110.

⁵² Tyrrel, *Introduct.* vol. 1. p. 126. Carte, vol. 1. p. 366.

⁵³ Lindenbrogius, *passim*.

⁵⁴ Tac. *de mor. Germ.*

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curious monument above mentioned of Saxon antiquity, preserved by Hickes. There is indeed a law of Alfred's which makes wilful murder capital⁵⁵; but this seems only to have been an attempt of that great legislator towards establishing a better police in the kingdom, and it probably remained without execution. By the laws of the same prince, a conspiracy against the life of the king might be redeemed by a fine⁵⁶.

THE price of all kinds of wounds was likewise fixed by the Saxon laws: A wound of an inch long under the hair was paid with one shilling: One of a like size in the face, two shillings: Thirty shillings for the loss of an ear; and so forth⁵⁷. There seems not to have been any difference made, according to the dignity of the person. By the laws of Ethelbert, any one who committed adultery with his neighbour's wife was obliged to pay him a fine, and buy him another wife⁵⁸.

THESE institutions are not peculiar to the ancient Germans. They seem to be the necessary progress of criminal jurisprudence among every free people, where the will of the sovereign is not implicitly obeyed. We find them among the

⁵⁵ LL. Ælf. § 12. Wilkins, p. 29. It is probable, that by wilful murder Alfred means a treacherous murder, committed by one who has no declared feud with another.

⁵⁶ LL. Ælf. § 4. Wilkins, p. 35.

⁵⁷ LL. Ælf. § 40. See also LL. Ethelb. § 34, etc.

⁵⁸ LL. Ethelb. § 32.

ancient Greeks during the time of the Trojan war. Compositions for murder are mentioned in Nestor's speech to Achilles in the ninth Iliad, and are called *arowai*. The Irish, who never had any connexions with the German nations, adopted the same practice till very lately; and the price of a man's head was called among them his *eric*; as we learn from Sir John Davis. The same custom seems also to have prevailed among the Jews⁵⁹.

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THEFT and robbery were frequent among the Anglo-Saxons. In order to impose some check upon these crimes, it was ordained, that no man should sell or buy any thing above twenty pence value, except in open market⁶⁰; and every bargain of sale must be executed before witnesses⁶¹. Gangs of robbers much disturbed the peace of the country; and the law determined, that a tribe of banditti, consisting of between seven and thirty-five persons, was to be called a *turma*, or troop: Any greater company was denominated an army⁶². The punishments for this crime were various; but none of them capital⁶³. If any man could track his stolen cattle into another's ground, the latter was obliged to show the tracks out of it, or pay their value⁶⁴.

⁵⁹ Exod. cap. xxi. 29, 30. ⁶⁰ LL. Æthelst. § 12.

⁶¹ Ibid. § 10. 12. LL. Edg. apud Wilkins, p. 80. LL. Ethelredi, § 4. apud Wilkins, p. 103. Hlothet et Eadm. § 16. LL. Canut. § 22.

⁶² LL. Inæ, § 12.

⁶³ Ibid. § 37.

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REBELLION, to whatever excess it was carried, was not capital, but might be redeemed by a sum of money ⁶⁵. The legislators, knowing it impossible to prevent all disorders, only imposed a higher fine on breaches of the peace committed in the king's court, or before an alderman. An alehouse too seems to have been considered as a privileged place; and any quarrels that arose there were more severely punished than elsewhere ⁶⁶.

Rules, of
proof.

IF the manner of punishing crimes among the Anglo-Saxons appear singular, the proofs were not less so; and were also the natural result of the situation of those people. Whatever we may imagine concerning the usual truth and sincerity of men, who live in a rude and barbarous state, there is much more falsehood, and even perjury among them, than among civilized nations: Virtue, which is nothing but a more enlarged and more cultivated reason, never flourishes to any degree, nor is founded on steady principles of honour, except where a good education becomes general; and where men are taught the pernicious consequences of vice, treachery, and immorality. Even superstition, though more prevalent among ignorant nations, is but a poor supply for the defects in knowledge and education: Our Euro-

⁶⁴ LL. Æthelst. § 2. Wilkins, p. 63.

⁶⁵ LL. Ethelredi, apud Wilkins, p. 110. LL. Ælf. § 4. Wilkins, p. 35.

⁶⁶ LL. Hloth. et Eadm. § 12, 13. LL. Ethelr. apud Wilkins, p. 117.

pean ancestors, who employed every moment the expedient of swearing on extraordinary crosses and reliques, were less honourable in all engagements than their posterity, who from experience have omitted those ineffectual securities. This general proneness to perjury was much increased by the usual want of discernment in judges, who could not discuss an intricate evidence, and were obliged to number, not weigh, the testimony of the witnesses⁶⁷. Hence the ridiculous practice of obliging men to bring compurgators, who, as they did not pretend to know any thing of the fact, expressed upon oath, that they believed the person spoke true; and these compurgators were in some cases multiplied to the number of three hundred⁶⁸. The practice also of single combat was employed by most nations on the continent as a remedy against false evidence⁶⁹; and though it was frequently dropped, from the opposition of the clergy, it was continually revived, from experience of the falsehood attending the testimony of witnesses⁷⁰. It became at last a species of jurisprudence: The cases were determined by law, in which the party might challenge his adversary, or the witnesses, or the judge him-

⁶⁷ Sometimes the laws fixed easy general rules for weighing the credibility of witnesses. A man, whose life was estimated at 120 shillings counterbalanced six ceorles, each of whose lives was only valued at twenty shillings and his oath was esteemed equivalent to that of all the six. See Wilkins, p. 72.

⁶⁸ Præf. Nicol. ad Wilkins, p. 11.

⁶⁹ LL. Burgund. cap. 45. LL. Lomb. lib. 2. tit. 55. cap. 34.

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self⁷¹ : And though these customs were absurd, they were rather an improvement on the methods of trial, which had formerly been practised among those barbarous nations, and which still prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons.

WHEN any controversy about a fact became too intricate for those ignorant judges to unravel, they had recourse to what they called the judgment of God, that is, to fortune : Their methods of consulting this oracle were various. One of them was the decision by the *cross* : It was practised in this manner. When a person was accused of any crime, he first cleared himself by oath, and he was attended by eleven compurgators. He next took two pieces of wood, one of which was marked with the sign of the cross ; and wrapping both up in wool, he placed them on the altar, or on some celebrated relique. After solemn prayers for the success of the experiment, a priest, or in his stead some unexperienced youth, took up one of the pieces of wood, and if he happened upon that which was marked with the figure of the cross, the person was pronounced innocent ; if otherwise, guilty⁷². This practice, as it arose from superstition, was abolished by it in France. The emperor, Lewis the Debonnaire, prohibited that method of trial, not because it was uncertain, but lest that sacred figure, says he, of the

⁷⁰ LL. Longob. lib. 2. tit. 55. cap. 23. apud Lindenb. p. 661.

⁷¹ See Desfontaines and Beaumanoir.

cross should be prostituted in common disputes and controversies ⁷³.

THE ordeal was another established method of trial among the Anglo-Saxons. It was practised either by boiling water or red-hot iron. The former was appropriated to the common people; the latter to the nobility. The water or iron was consecrated by many prayers, masses, fastings, and exorcisms ⁷⁴; after which, the person accused either took up a stone sunk in the water ⁷⁵ to a certain depth, or carried the iron to a certain distance; and his hand being wrapped up, and the covering sealed for three days, if there appeared, on examining it, no marks of burning, he was pronounced innocent; if otherwise, guilty ⁷⁶. The trial by cold water was different: The person was thrown into consecrated water; if he swam, he was guilty; if he sunk, innocent ⁷⁷. It is difficult for us to conceive, how any innocent person could ever escape by the one trial, or any criminal be convicted by the other. But there was another usage admirably calculated for allowing every criminal to escape, who had confidence enough to try it. A consecrated cake, called a corned, was produced; which if the person

⁷² LL. Frison. tit. 14. apud Lindenbrogium, p. 496.

⁷³ Du Cange in verb. Crux.

⁷⁴ Spellm. in verb. Ordeal. Parker, p. 155. Lindenbrog. p. 1299. ⁷⁵ LL. Inæ, § 77.

⁷⁶ Sometimes the person accused walked barefoot over red-hot iron. ⁷⁷ Spellman in verb. Orealium.

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Military
force.

THE feudal law, if it had place at all among the Anglo-Saxons, which is doubtful, was not certainly extended over all the landed property, and was not attended with those consequences of homage, reliefs⁷⁹, wardship, marriage, and other burthens, which were inseparable from it in the kingdoms of the continent. As the Saxons expelled or almost entirely destroyed the ancient Britons, they planted themselves in this island on the same footing with their ancestors in Germany, and found no occasion for the feudal institutions⁸⁰, which were calculated to maintain a kind of standing army, always in readiness to suppress any insurrection among the conquered people. The trouble and expence of defending the state in England lay equally upon all the land; and it was usual for every five hides to equip a man for the service. The *trinoda necessitas*, as it was called, or the burthen of military expeditions, of repairing highways, and of building and supporting bridges,

⁷⁸ Spellm. in verb. Corfned. Parker, p. 156. Text. Ruffenf. p. 33.

⁷⁹ On the death of an alderman, a greater or lesser thane, there was a payment made to the king of his best arms; and this was called his heriot: But this was not of the nature of a relief. See Spellm. of tenures, p. 2. The value of this heriot was fixed by Canute's laws, § 69.

⁸⁰ Bracton de Acqu. rer. domin. lib. 2. cap. 16. See more fully Spellman of feuds and tenures, and Craigins de jure feud. lib. 1. dieg. 7.

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was inseparable from landed property, even though it belonged to the church or monasteries, unless exempted by a particular charter⁸¹. The ceorles or husbandmen were provided with arms, and were obliged to take their turn in military duty⁸². They were computed to be 243,600 hides in England⁸³; consequently the ordinary military force of the kingdom consisted of 48,720 men; though, no doubt, on extraordinary occasions, a greater number might be assembled. The king and nobility had some military tenants, who were called Sithcun-men⁸⁴. And there were some lands annexed to the office of alderman, and to other offices; but these probably were not of great extent, and were possessed only during pleasure, as in the commencement of the feudal law in other countries of Europe.

THE revenue of the king seems to have consisted chiefly in his demesnes, which were large; and in the tolls and imposts which he probably levied at discretion on the boroughs and sea-ports, that lay within his demesnes. He could not alienate any part of the crown lands, even to religious uses, without the consent of the states⁸⁵. Danegelt was a land-tax of a shilling a hide, imposed by the states⁸⁶, either for payment of the sums exacted by the Danes, or for putting the kingdom in a posture of defence against those invaders⁸⁷.

⁸¹ Spellm. Conc. vol. i. p. 256.⁸² Inæ, § 51.⁸³ Spellm. of feuds and tenures, p. 17.⁸⁴ Spellm. Conc. vol. i. p. 195.⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 340.⁸⁶ Chron. Sax. p. 128.⁸⁷ LL. Edw. Con. §. 12.

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Value of
money.

THE Saxon pound, as likewise that which was coined for some centuries after the conquest, was near three times the weight of our present money: There were forty-eight shillings in the pound, and five pence in a shilling⁸⁸; consequently a Saxon shilling was near a fifth heavier than ours, and a Saxon penny near three times as heavy⁸⁹. As to the value of money in those times, compared to commodities, there are some, though not very certain, means of computation. A sheep by the laws of Athelstan was estimated at a shilling; that is fifteen-pence of our money. The fleece was two-fifths of the value of the whole sheep⁹⁰; much above its present estimation; and the reason probably was, that the Saxons, like the ancients, were little acquainted with any clothing but what was made of wool. Silk and cotton were quite unknown: Linen was not much used. An ox was computed at six times the value of a sheep; a cow at four⁹¹. If we suppose, that the cattle in that age, from the defects in husbandry, were not so large as they are at present in England, we may compute, that money was then near ten times of greater value. A horse was valued at about thirty-six shillings of our money, or thirty Saxon shillings⁹²; a mare a third less: A man at three pounds⁹³. The board-wages of a child the first year was eight shil-

⁸⁸ LL. Ælf. § 40.⁸⁹ Fleetwood's Chron. Pretiosum, p. 27, 28, etc.⁹⁰ LL. Inæ, § 69.⁹¹ Wilkins, p. 66.⁹² Ibid. p. 126.⁹³ Ibid.

lings, together with a cow's pasture in summer, and an ox's in winter ⁹⁴. William of Malmesbury mentions it as a remarkably high price that William Rufus gave fifteen marks for a horse, or about thirty pounds of our present money ⁹⁵. Between the years 900 and 1000, Ednoth bought a hide of land for about 118 shillings of present money ⁹⁶. This was little more than a shilling an acre, which indeed appears to have been the usual price, as we may learn from other accounts ⁹⁷. A palfrey was sold for twelve shillings about the year 966 ⁹⁸. The value of an ox in king Ethelred's time was between seven and eight shillings; a cow about six shillings ⁹⁹. Gervas of Tilbury says, that in Henry I.'s time, bread which would suffice a hundred men for a day was rated at three shillings, or a shilling of that age; for it is thought that soon after the conquest a pound sterling was divided into twenty shillings: A sheep was rated at a shilling, and so of other things in proportion. In Athelstan's time a ram was valued at a shilling, or four-pence Saxon ¹⁰⁰. The tenants of Shireburn were obliged, at their choice, to pay either six-pence or four hens ¹⁰¹. About 1232, the abbot of St. Albans, going on a journey, hired seven handsome stout horses; and agreed, if any of

⁹⁴ LL. Inæ, § 38.⁹⁵ P. 121.⁹⁶ Hist. Ramef. p. 415.⁹⁷ Hist. Elienf. p. 473.⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 471.⁹⁹ Wilkins, p. 126.¹⁰⁰ Wilkins, p. 56.¹⁰¹ Monast. Anglic. vol. ii. p. 538

Appendix

I.

them died on the road, to pay the owner 30 shillings a-piece of our present money ¹⁰². It is to be remarked, that in all ancient times, the raising of corn, especially wheat, being a species of manufactory, that commodity always bore a higher price, compared to cattle, than it does in our times ¹⁰³. The Saxon Chronicle tells us ¹⁰⁴, that in the reign of Edward the Confessor there was the most terrible famine ever known; in so much that a quarter of wheat rose to sixty pennies, or fifteen shillings of our present money. Consequently it was as dear as if it now cost seven pounds ten shillings. This much exceeds the great famine in the end of queen Elizabeth; when a quarter of wheat was sold for four pounds. Money in this last period was nearly of the same value as in our time. These severe famines are a certain proof of bad husbandry.

ON the whole, there are three things to be considered, wherever a sum of money is mentioned in ancient times. First the change of denomination, by which a pound has been reduced to the third part of its ancient weight in silver. Secondly, the change in value by the greater plenty of money, which has reduced the same weight of silver to ten times less value, compared to commodities; and consequently a pound sterling to the thirtieth part of the ancient value. Thirdly, the fewer people and less industry, which were

¹⁰² Mat. Paris.¹⁰³ Fleetwood, p. 83. 94. 96. 98.¹⁰⁴ P. 157.

then to be found in every European kingdom. This circumstance made even the thirtieth part of the sum more difficult to levy, and caused any sum to have more than thirty times greater weight and influence both abroad and at home, than in our times; in the same manner that a sum, a hundred thousand pounds for instance, is at present more difficult to levy in a small state, such as Bavaria, and can produce greater effects on such a small community, than on England. This last difference is not easy to be calculated: But allowing, that England has now six times more industry, and three times more people than it had at the conquest and for some reigns after that period, we are, upon that supposition, to conceive taking all circumstances together, every sum of money mentioned by historians, as if it were multiplied more than a hundred fold above a sum of the same denomination at present.

IN the Saxon times, land was divided equally among all the male-children of the deceased, according to the custom of Gavelkind. The practice of entails is to be found in those times¹⁰⁵. Land was chiefly of two kinds, bookland, or land held by book or charter, which was regarded as full property, and descended to the heirs of the possessor; and folkland, or the land held by the ceorles and common people, who were removeable at pleasure, and were indeed only tenants during the will of their lords.

THE first attempt, which we find in England

Appendix I. to separate the ecclesiastical from the civil jurisdiction, was that law of Edgar, by which all disputes among the clergy were ordered to be carried before the bishop ¹⁰⁶. The penances were then very severe, but as a man could buy them off with money, or might substitute others to perform them, they lay easy upon the rich ¹⁰⁷.

Manners.

WITH regard to the manners of the Anglo-Saxons we can say little, but that they were in general a rude, uncultivated people, ignorant of letters, unskilled in the mechanical arts, untamed to submission under law and government, addicted to intemperance, riot, and disorder. Their best quality was their military courage, which yet was not supported by discipline or conduct. Their want of fidelity to the prince, or to any trust reposed in them, appears strongly in the history of their later period; and their want of humanity in all their history. Even the Norman historians, notwithstanding the low state of the arts in their own country, speak of them as barbarians, when they mention the invasion made upon them by the duke of Normandy ¹⁰⁸. The conquest put the people in a situation of receiving slowly, from abroad, the rudiments of science and cultivation, and of correcting their rough and licentious manners.

¹⁰⁵ LL. Ælf. § 37. apud Wilkins, p. 43. ¹⁰⁶ Wilkins, p. 83. ¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 96, 97. Spell. Conc. p. 473.

¹⁰⁸ Gul. Put. p. 202.

C H A P. I V.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

Consequences of the battle of Hastings — Submission of the English — Settlement of the government — King's return to Normandy — Discontents of the English — Their insurrections — Rigors of the Norman government — New insurrections — New rigors of the government — Introduction of the feudal law — Innovation in ecclesiastical government — Insurrection of the Norman barons — Dispute about investitures — Revolt of prince Robert — Domesday-book — The new forest — War with France — Death — and character of William the Conqueror.

NOTHING could exceed the consternation which seized the English, when they received intelligence of the unfortunate battle of Hastings, the death of their king, the slaughter of their principal nobility and of their bravest warriors, and the rout and dispersion of the remainder. But though the loss, which they had sustained in that fatal action, was considerable, it might have been repaired by a great nation; where the people were generally armed, and where there resided so many powerful noblemen in every province, who could have assembled their retainers, and have obliged the duke of Normandy

C H A P.

IV.

1066.

Consequences of the battle of Hastings.

C H A P. to divide his army , and probably to waste it
 IV. in a variety of actions and rencounters. It was thus that the kingdom had formerly resisted, for many years, its invaders, and had been gradually subdued, by the continued efforts of the Romans, Saxons, and Danes; and equal difficulties might have been apprehended by William in this bold and hazardous enterprize. But there were several vices in the Anglo-Saxon constitution, which rendered it difficult for the English to defend their liberties in so critical an emergency. The people had in a great measure lost all national pride and spirit, by their recent and long subjection to the Danes; and as Canute had, in the course of his administration, much abated the rigors of conquest, and had governed them equitably by their own laws, they regarded with the less terror the ignominy of a foreign yoke, and deemed the inconveniences of submission less formidable than those of bloodshed, war, and resistance. Their attachment also to the ancient royal family had been much weakened by their habits of submission to the Danish princes, and by their late election of Harold, or their acquiescence in his usurpation. And as they had long been accustomed to regard Edgar Atheling, the only heir of the Saxon line, as unfit to govern them even in times of order and tranquillity; they could entertain small hopes of his being able to repair such great losses as they had sustained, or to withstand the victorious arms of the duke of Normandy.

THAT

THAT they might not, however, be altogether wanting to themselves in this extreme necessity, the English took some steps towards adjusting their disjointed government, and uniting themselves against the common enemy. The two potent earls, Edwin and Morcar, who had fled to London with the remains of the broken army, took the lead on this occasion: In concert with Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, a man possessed of great authority, and of ample revenues, they proclaimed Edgar, and endeavoured to put the people in a posture of defence, and encourage them to resist the Normans¹. But the terror of the late defeat, and the near neighbourhood of the invaders, increased the confusion, inseparable from great revolutions; and every resolution proposed was hasty, fluctuating, tumultuary; disconcerted by fear or faction; ill planned, and worse executed.

WILLIAM, that his enemies might have no leisure to recover from their consternation or unite their counsels, immediately put himself in motion after his victory, and resolved to prosecute an enterprize, which nothing but celerity and vigour could render finally successful. His first attempt was against Romney, whose inhabitants he severely punished, on account of their cruel treatment of some Norman seamen and soldiers, who had been carried thither by stress

¹ Gul. Pictav. p. 205. Order. Vitalis, p. 502. Hoveden, p. 449. Knyghton, p. 2343.

C H A P. of weather, or by a mistake in their course²:

IV. And foreseeing that his conquest of England might still be attended with many difficulties and with much opposition, he deemed it necessary, before he should advance farther into the country, to make himself master of Dover, which would both secure him a retreat in case of adverse fortune, and afford him a safe landing-place for such supplies as might be requisite for pushing his advantages. The terror diffused by his victory at Hastings was so great, that the garrison of Dover, though numerous and well provided, immediately capitulated; and as the Normans, rushing in to take possession of the town, hastily set fire to some of the houses, William, desirous to conciliate the minds of the English by an appearance of lenity and justice, made compensation to the inhabitants for their losses³.

THE Norman army, being much distressed with a dysentery, was obliged to remain here eight days; but the duke, on their recovery, advanced with quick marches towards London, and by his approach increased the confusions, which were already so prevalent in the English counsels. The ecclesiastics in particular, whose influence was great over the people, began to declare in his favour; and as most of the bishops and dignified clergymen were even then Frenchmen or Normans, the pope's bull, by which his enterprise was avowed and hallowed, was now

² Gul. Pictav. p. 204.

³ Ibid.

openly insisted on as a reason for general submission. 6 H A P.
IV.
 The superior learning of those prelates, which, during the Confessor's reign, had raised them above the ignorant Saxons, made their opinions be received with implicit faith; and a young prince, like Edgar, whose capacity was deemed so mean, was but ill qualified to resist the impression, which they made on the minds of the people. A repulse, which a body of Londoners received from five hundred Norman horse, renewed in the city the terror of the great defeat at Hastings; the easy submission of all the inhabitants of Kent was an additional discouragement to them; the burning of Southwark before their eyes made them dread a like fate to their own city; and no man any longer entertained thoughts but of immediate safety and of self-preservation. Even the earls, Edwin and Morcar, in despair of making effectual resistance, retired with their troops to their own provinces; and the people thenceforth disposed themselves unanimously to yield to the victor. As soon as he passed the Thames at Wallingford, and reached Berkhamstead, Stigand, the primate, made submissions to him: Before he came within sight of the city, all the chief nobility, and Edgar Atheling himself, the new elected king, came into his camp, and declared their intention of yielding to his authority*. They requested him to mount their throne, which they now considered as vacant:

Submission
of the Eng-
lish.

* Hoveden, p. 450. Flor. Wigorn. p. 634.

C H A P. and declared to him, that, as they had always
 IV. been ruled by regal power, they desired to follow, in this particular, the example of their ancestors, and knew of no one more worthy than himself to hold the reins of government⁵.

THOUGH this was the great object, to which the duke's enterprize tended, he feigned to deliberate on the offer; and being desirous, at first, of preserving the appearance of a legal administration, he wished to obtain a more explicit and formal consent of the English nation⁶: But Aimar of Aquitain, a man equally respected for valour in the field, and for prudence in council, remonstrating with him on the danger of delay in so critical a conjuncture, he laid aside all farther scruples, and accepted of the crown which was tendered him. Orders were immediately issued to prepare every thing for the ceremony of his coronation; but as he was yet afraid to place entire confidence in the Londoners, who were numerous and warlike, he meanwhile commanded fortresses to be erected in order to curb the inhabitants, and to secure his person and government⁷.

STIGAND was not much in the duke's favour, both because he had intruded into the see on the expulsion of Robert, the Norman, and because he possessed such influence and authority over the English⁸ as might be dangerous to a new

⁵ Gul. Pict. p. 205. Ord. Vital. p. 503.

⁶ Gul. Pictav. p. 205. ⁷ Ibid. ⁸ Eadmer, p. 6.

established monarch. William, therefore, pretending that the primate had obtained his pall in an irregular manner from pope Benedict IX. who was himself an usurper, refused to be consecrated by him, and conferred this honour on Aldred, archbishop of York. Westminster abbey was the place appointed for that magnificent ceremony; the most considerable of the nobility, both English and Norman, attended the duke on this occasion; Aldred in a short speech asked the former, whether they agreed to accept of William as their king; the bishop of Coutance put the same question to the latter; and both being answered with acclamations⁹, Aldred administered to the duke the usual coronation-oath, by which he bound himself to protect the church, to administer justice, and to repress violence: He then anointed him and put the crown upon his head¹⁰. There appeared nothing but joy in the countenance of the spectators: But in that very moment, there burst forth the strongest symptoms of the jealousy and animosity which prevailed between the nations, and which continually increased during the reign of this prince. The Norman soldiers, who were placed without in order, to guard the church, hearing

C H A P.
IV.

25 Dec.

⁹ Order. Vital. p. 503.

¹⁰ Malmesbury, p. 271, says, that he also promised to govern the Normans and English by equal laws; and this addition to the usual oath seems not improbable, considering the circumstances of the times.

CHAP. the shouts within, fancied that the English were
 IV. offering violence to their duke; and they immediately assaulted the populace, and set fire to the neighbouring houses. The alarm was conveyed to the nobility who surrounded the prince; both English and Normans, full of apprehensions, rushed out to secure themselves from the present danger; and it was with difficulty that William himself was able to appease the tumult¹¹.

1067.
 Settlement
 of the go-
 vernment.

THE king, thus possessed of the throne by a pretended destination of king Edward, and by an irregular election of the people, but still more by force of arms, retired from London to Berking in Essex; and there received the submissions of all thenobility, who had not attended his coronation. Edric, surnamed, the Forester, grand-nephew to that Edric so noted for his repeated acts of perfidy during the reigns of Ethelred and Edmond; earl Coxo, a man famous for bravery; even Edwin and Morcar, earls of Mercia and Northumberland; with the other principal noblemen of England, came and swore fealty to him; were received into favour, and were confirmed in the possession of their estates and dignities¹². Every thing bore the appearance of peace and tranquillity; and William had no other occupation than to give contentment to the foreigners who had assisted him to mount the throne, and to his new subjects, who had so readily submitted to him.

¹¹ Gul. Pict. p. 206. Order. Vitalis, p. 503.

¹² Gul. Pictav. p. 208. Order. Vital. p. 506.

He had got possession of the treasure of Harold, which was considerable; and being also supplied with rich presents from the opulent men in all parts of England, who were solicitous to gain the favour of their new sovereign, he distributed great sums among his troops, and by this liberality gave them hopes of obtaining at length those more durable establishments, which they had expected from his enterprize¹³. The ecclesiastics, both at home and abroad, had much forwarded his success; and he failed not, in return, to express his gratitude and devotion in the manner which was most acceptable to them: He sent Harold's standard to the pope, accompanied with many valuable presents: All the considerable monasteries and churches in France, where, prayers had been put up for his success, now tasted of his bounty¹⁴: The English monks found him well disposed to favour their order: And he built a new convent near Hastings, which he called *Battle-Abbey*, and which, on pretence of supporting monks to pray for his own soul, and for that of Harold, served as a lasting memorial of his victory¹⁵.

He introduced into England that strict execution of justice, for which his administration had been

¹³ Gul. Pict. p. 206.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Gul. Gemet. p. 288. Chron. Sax. p. 189. M. West. p. 226. M. Paris, p. 9. Diceto, p. 482. This convent was freed by him from all episcopal jurisdiction. Monast. Ang. tom. I. p. 311, 312.

C H A P. much celebrated in Normandy ; and even during
 IV. this violent revolution , every disorder or oppression
 1067. met with rigorous punishment ¹⁶. His army in
 particular was governed with severe discipline ;
 and notwithstanding the insolence of victory ,
 care was taken to give as little offence as possible
 to the jealousy of the vanquished. The king
 appeared solicitous to unite in an amicable manner
 the Normans and the English, by intermarriages and
 alliances ; and all his new subjects who approached
 his person were received with affability and regard.
 No signs of suspicion appeared , not even towards
 Edgar Atheling , the heir of the ancient royal
 family , whom William confirmed in the honours
 of earl of Oxford , conferred on him by Harold ,
 and whom he affected to treat with the highest
 kindness , as nephew to the Confessor , his great
 friend and benefactor. Though he confiscated
 the estates of Harold , and of those who had
 fought in the battle of Hastings on the side of
 that prince , whom he represented as an usurper ,
 he seemed willing to admit of every plausible
 excuse for past opposition to his pretensions , and
 he received many into favour , who had carried
 arms against him. He confirmed the liberties
 and immunities of London and the other cities of
 England ; and appeared desirous of replacing
 every thing on ancient establishments. In his
 whole administration , he bore the semblance of
 the lawful prince , not of the conqueror ; and the

¹⁶ Gul. Pict. p. 208. Order. Vital. p. 506.

English began to flatter themselves, that they had changed, not the form of their government, but the succession only of their sovereigns, a matter which gave them small concern. The better to reconcile his new subjects to his authority, William made a progress through some parts of England; and besides a splendid court and majestic presence, which overawed the people, already struck with his military fame, the appearance of his clemency and justice gained the approbation of the wise, attentive to the first steps of their new sovereign.

BUT amidst this confidence and friendship, which he expressed for the English, the king took care to place all real power in the hands of his Normans, and still to keep possession of the sword, to which, he was sensible he had owed his advancement to sovereign authority. He disarmed the city of London and other places, which appeared most warlike and populous; and building citadels in that capital, as well as in Winchester, Hereford, and the cities best situated for commanding the kingdom, he quartered Norman soldiers in all of them, and left no where any power able to resist or oppose him. He bestowed the forfeited estates on the most eminent of his captains, and established funds for the payment of his soldiers. And thus; while his civil administration carried the face of a legal magistrate, his military institutions were those of a master and tyrant; at least of one, who reserved to

C H A P.

IV.

1067.

C H A P. himself, whenever he pleased, the power of
 IV. assuming that character.

1067.

King's re-
 turn to
 Normandy.

March.

By this mixture, however, of vigor and lenity, he had so foothed the minds of the English, that he thought he might safely revisit his native country, and enjoy the triumph and congratulation of his ancient subjects. He left the administration in the hands of his uterine brother, Odo, bishop of Baieux, and of William Fitz Osberne. That their authority might be exposed to less danger, he carried over with him all the most considerable nobility of England, who, while they served to grace his court by their presence and magnificent retinues, were in reality hostages for the fidelity of the nation. Among these, were Edgar Atheling, Stigand the primate, the earls Edwin and Morcar, Waltheof, the son of the brave earl Siward, with others, eminent for the greatness of their fortunes and families, or for their ecclesiastical and civil dignities. He was visited at the abbey of Fescamp, where he resided during some time, by Rodulph, uncle to the king of France, and by many powerful princes and nobles, who, having contributed to his enterprize, were desirous of participating in the joy and advantages of its success. His English courtiers, willing to ingratiate themselves with their new sovereign, outvied each other in equipages and entertainments; and made a display of riches, which struck the foreigners with astonishment. William of Poitiers, a Norman historian¹⁷, who was present, speaks

¹⁷ P. 211, 212.

with admiration of the beauty of their persons, the size and workmanship of their silver plate, the costliness of their embroideries, an art in which the English then excelled; and he expresses himself in such terms, as tend much to exalt our idea of the opulence and cultivation of the people¹⁸. But though every thing bore the face of joy and festivity, and William himself treated his new courtiers with great appearance of kindness, it was impossible altogether to prevent the insolence of the Normans; and the English nobles derived little satisfaction from those entertainments, where they considered themselves as led in triumph by their ostentatious conqueror.

IN England affairs took still a worse turn during the absence of the sovereign. Discontents and complaints multiplied every where; secret conspiracies were entered into against the government; hostilities were already begun in many places; and every thing seemed to menace a revolution as rapid as that which had placed William on the throne. The historian above mentioned, who is a panegyrist of his master, throws the blame entirely on the fickle and mutinous disposition of the English, and highly

CHAP.
IV.
1067.
Discontents
of the Eng-
lish.

¹⁸ As the historian chiefly insists on the silver plate, his panegyric on the English magnificence shows only how incompetent a judge he was of the matter. Silver was then of ten times the value, and was more than twenty times more rare than at present; and consequently, of all species of luxury, plate must have been the rarest.

G H A P. celebrates the justice and lenity of Odo's and Fitz
 IV. Osbern's administration ¹⁹. But other historians,
 1067. with more probability, impute the cause chiefly
 to the Normans, who, despising a people that had
 so easily submitted to the yoke, envying their
 riches, and grudging the restraints imposed upon
 their own rapine, were desirous of provoking
 them to a rebellion, by which they expected to
 acquire new confiscations and forfeitures, and to
 gratify those unbounded hopes, which they had
 formed in entering on this enterprize ²⁰.

It is evident, that the chief reason of this
 alteration in the sentiments of the English, must
 be ascribed to the departure of William, who
 was alone able to curb the violence of his captains,
 and to overawe the mutinies of the people. Nothing
 indeed appears more strange, than that this prince,
 in less than three months after the conquest of a
 great, warlike, and turbulent nation, should absent
 himself, in order to revisit his own country,
 which remained in profound tranquillity, and
 was not menaced by any of its neighbours; and
 should so long leave his jealous subjects at the
 mercy of an insolent and licentious army. Were
 we not assured of the solidity of his genius, and
 the good sense displayed in all other circumstances
 of his conduct, we might ascribe this measure to
 a vain ostentation, which rendered him impatient
 to display his pomp and magnificence among his
 ancient subjects. It is therefore more natural to

¹⁹ P. 212.

²⁰ Order. Vital. p. 507.

believe, that, in so extraordinary a step, he was guided by a concealed policy; and that, though he had thought proper at first to allure the people to submission by the semblance of a legal administration, he found, that he could neither satisfy his rapacious captains, nor secure his unstable government, without farther exerting the rights of conquest, and seizing the possessions of the English. In order to have a pretext for this violence, he endeavoured, without discovering his intentions, to provoke and allure them into insurrections, which, he thought, could never prove dangerous, while he detained all the principal nobility in Normandy, while a great and victorious army was quartered in England, and while he himself was so near to suppress any tumult or rebellion. But as no ancient writer has ascribed this tyrannical purpose to William, it scarcely seems allowable, from conjecture alone, to throw such an imputation upon him.

BUT whether we are to account for that measure from the king's vanity or from his policy, it was the immediate cause of all the calamities which the English endured during this and the subsequent reigns, and gave rise to those mutual jealousies and animosities between them and the Normans, which were never appeased, till a long tract of time had gradually united the two nations, and made them one people. The inhabitants of Kent, who had first submitted to the Conqueror, were the first that attempted to throw off the yoke; and in confederacy with Eustace, count of Bologne,

C H A P.

IV.

1067.

Their insurrections.

C H A P. who had also been disgusted by the Normans,
 IV. they made an attempt, though without success,
 1067. on the garrison of Dover²¹. Edric, the Forester,
 whose possessions lay on the banks of the Severne,
 being provoked at the depredations of some
 Norman captains in his neighbourhood, formed
 an alliance with Blethyn and Rowallan, two
 Welsh princes; and endeavoured, with their
 assistance, to repel force by force²². But though
 these open hostilities were not very considerable,
 the disaffection was general among the English,
 who had become sensible, though too late, of
 their defenceless condition, and began already to
 experience those insults and injuries, which a
 nation must always expect, that allows itself to be
 reduced to that abject situation. A secret conspiracy
 was entered into, to perpetrate in one day a general
 massacre of the Normans, like that which had
 formerly been executed upon the Danes; and the
 quarrel was become so general and national, that
 the vassals of earl Coxo, having desired him to
 head them in an insurrection, and finding him
 resolute in maintaining his fidelity to William,
 put him to death as a traitor to his country.

Decemb. 6. THE king, informed of these dangerous discon-
 tents, hastened over to England; and by his
 presence, and the vigorous measures which he
 pursued, disconcerted all the schemes of the

²¹ Gul. Gemet. p. 289. Order. Vital. p. 508. Anglia
 Sacra, vol. I. p. 245. ²² Hoveden, p. 450. M. West.
 p. 226. Sim. Dunelm. p. 197.

conspirators. Such of them as had been more violent in their mutiny betrayed their guilt, by flying or concealing themselves; and the confiscation of their estates, while it increased the number of malecontents, both enabled William to gratify farther the rapacity of his Norman captains, and gave them the prospect of new forfeitures and attainders. The king began to regard all his English subjects as inveterate and irreclaimable enemies; and thenceforth either embraced, or was more fully confirmed in the resolution, of seizing their possessions, and of reducing them to the most abject slavery. Though the natural violence and severity of his temper made him incapable of feeling any remorse in the execution of this tyrannical purpose, he had art enough to conceal his intention, and to preserve still some appearance of justice in his oppressions. He ordered all the English, who had been arbitrarily expelled by the Normans, during his absence, to be restored to their estates²³: But at the same time, he imposed a general tax on the people, that of Danegelt, which had been abolished by the Confessor; and which had always been extremely odious to the nation²⁴.

C H A P.

IV.

1067.

1068.

As the vigilance of William overawed the malecontents, their insurrections were more the

²³ Chron. Sax. p. 173. This fact is a full proof, that the Normans had committed great injustice, and were the real cause of the insurrections of the English.

²⁴ Hoveden, p. 450. Sim. Dunelm, p. 107. Alur. Beverl. p. 127.

C H A P. IV. 1068. result of an impatient humour in the people, than of any regular conspiracy, which could give them a rational hope of success against the established power of the Normans. The inhabitants of Exeter, instigated by Githa, mother to king Harold, refused to admit a Norman garrison, and betaking themselves to arms, were strengthened by the accession of the neighbouring inhabitants of Devonshire and Cornwall²⁵. The king hastened with his forces to chastise this revolt; and on his approach, the wiser and more considerable citizens, sensible of the unequal contest, persuaded the people to submit, and to deliver hostages for their obedience. A sudden mutiny of the populace broke this agreement; and William, appearing before the walls, ordered the eyes of one of the hostages to be put out, as an earnest of that severity, which the rebels must expect, if they persevered in their revolt²⁶. The inhabitants were anew seized with terror, and surrendering at discretion, threw themselves at the king's feet, and supplicated his clemency and forgiveness. William was not destitute of generosity, when his temper was not hardened either by policy or passion: He was prevailed on to pardon the rebels, and he set guards on all the gates, in order to prevent the rapacity and insolence of his soldiery²⁷. Githa escaped with her treasures to Flanders. The malecontents of Cornwall imitated the example of Exeter, and met with like treatment:

²⁵ Order. Vital. p. 510.²⁶ Ibid.²⁷ Ibid.

And

And the king, having built a citadel in that city, which he put under the command of Baldwin, son of earl Gilbert, returned to Winchester, and dispersed his army into their quarters. He was here joined by his wife, Matilda, who had not before visited England, and whom he now ordered to be crowned by archbishop Aldred. Soon after, she brought him an accession to his family, by the birth of a fourth son, whom he named Henry. His three elder sons, Robert, Richard, and William, still resided in Normandy.

BUT though the king appeared thus fortunate both in public and domestic life, the discontents of his English subjects augmented daily; and the injuries, committed and suffered on both sides, rendered the quarrel between them and the Normans absolutely incurable. The insolence of victorious masters, dispersed throughout the kingdom, seemed intolerable to the natives; and wherever they found the Normans, separate or assembled in small bodies, they secretly set upon them, and gratified their vengeance by the slaughter of their enemies. But an insurrection in the north drew thither the general attention, and seemed to threaten more important consequences. Edwin and Morcar appeared at the head of this rebellion; and these potent noblemen, before they took arms, stipulated for foreign succours, from their nephew Blethin, prince of North-Wales, from Malcolm, king of Scotland, and from Sweyn, king of Denmark. Besides the general discontent, which had seized the English; the two earls were

C H A P.
IV.
1068.

C H A P. incited to this revolt by private injuries. William,
 IV. in order to insure them to his interests, had, on
 1068. his accession, promised his daughter in marriage
 to Edwin; but either he had never seriously
 intended to perform this engagement, or having
 changed his plan of administration in England from
 clemency to rigor, he thought it was to little
 purpose, if he gained one family, while he enraged
 the whole nation. When Edwin, therefore,
 renewed his applications, he gave him an absolute
 denial²⁸; and this disappointment, added to so
 many other reasons of disgust, induced that noble-
 man and his brother to concur with their incensed
 countrymen, and to make one general effort for
 the recovery of their ancient liberties. William
 knew the importance of celerity in quelling an
 insurrection, supported by such powerful leaders,
 and so agreeable to the wishes of the people;
 and having his troops always in readiness, he
 advanced by great journies to the north. On his
 march he gave orders to fortify the castle of
 Warwic, of which he left Henry de Beaumont
 governor, and that of Nottingham, which he
 committed to the custody of William Peverell,
 another Norman captain²⁹. He reached York
 before the rebels were in any condition for resist-
 ance, or were joined by any of the foreign
 succours, which they expected, except a small
 reinforcement from Wales³⁰; and the two earls
 found no means of safety, but having recourse to

²⁸ Order. Vital. p. 511.²⁹ Ibid.³⁰ Ibid.

the clemency of the victor. Archil, a potent nobleman in those parts, imitated their example, and delivered his son as a hostage for his fidelity³¹; nor were the people, thus deserted by their leaders, able to make any farther resistance. But the treatment, which William gave the chiefs, was very different from that which fell to the share of their followers. He observed religiously the terms, which he had granted to the former; and allowed them, for the present, to keep possession of their estates; but he extended the rigors of his confiscations over the latter, and gave away their lands to his foreign adventurers. These, planted throughout the whole country, and in possession of the military power, left Edwin and Morcar, whom he pretended to spare, destitute of all support, and ready to fall, whenever he should think proper to command their ruin. A peace, which he made with Malcolm, who did him homage for Cumberland, seemed, at the same time, to deprive them of all prospect of foreign assistance³².

C H A P.

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1068.

THE English were now sensible that their final destruction was intended; and that, instead of a sovereign, whom they had hoped to gain by their submission, they had tamely surrendered themselves, without resistance, to a tyrant and a conqueror. Though the early confiscation of Harold's followers might seem iniquitous; being inflicted on men who had never sworn fealty to

Rigors of
the Norman
government.³¹ Order. Vital. p. 511.³² Ibid.

C H A P. the duke of Normandy, who were ignorant of his
IV. pretensions, and who only fought in defence of
1068. the government, which they themselves had
established in their own country: Yet were these
rigors, however contrary to the ancient Saxon
laws, excused on account of the urgent necessities
of the prince; and those who were not involved
in the present ruin, hoped, that they should
thenceforth enjoy without molestation their pos-
sessions and their dignities. But the successive
destruction of so many other families convinced
them, that the king intended to rely entirely on
the support and affections of foreigners; and they
foresaw new forfeitures, attainders, and acts of
violence, as the necessary result of this destructive
plan of administration. They observed, that no
Englishman possessed his confidence, or was
entrusted with any command or authority; and
that the strangers, whom a rigorous discipline
could have but ill restrained, were encouraged in
their insolence and tyranny against them. The
easy submission of the kingdom on its first inva-
sion had exposed the natives to contempt; the
subsequent proofs of their animosity and resent-
ment had made them the object of hatred; and
they were now deprived of every expedient, by
which they could hope to make themselves either
regarded or beloved by their sovereign. Impressed
with the sense of this dismal situation, many
Englishmen fled into foreign countries, with an
intention of passing their lives abroad free from
oppression, or of returning on a favourable

opportunity to assist their friends in the recovery of their native liberties³³. Edgar Atheling himself, dreading the insidious caresses of William, was persuaded by Cospatric, a powerful Northumbrian, to escape with him into Scotland; and he carried thither his two sisters, Margaret and Christina. They were well received by Malcolm, who soon after espoused Margaret, the elder sister; and partly with a view of strengthening his kingdom by the accession of so many strangers, partly in hopes of employing them against the growing power of William, he gave great countenance to all the English exiles. Many of them settled there; and laid the foundation of families which afterwards made a figure in that country.

WHILE the English suffered under these oppressions, even the foreigners were not much at their ease; but finding themselves surrounded on all hands by enraged enemies, who took every advantage against them, and menaced them with still more bloody effects of the public resentment, they began to wish again for the tranquillity and security of their native country. Hugh de Grentmesnil, and Humphry de Teliol, though entrusted with great commands, desired to be dismissed the service; and some others imitated their example: A desertion which was highly resented by the king, and which he punished by the confiscation of all their possessions in England³⁴. But

³³ Order. Vital. p. 508. M. West. p. 225. M. Paris, p. 4. Sim. Dun. p. 197.

³⁴ Order. Vitalis, p. 512.

C H A P. IV. William's bounty to his followers could not fail of alluring many new adventurers into his service; and the rage of the vanquished English served only to excite the attention of the king and those warlike chiefs; and keep them in readiness to suppress every commencement of domestic rebellion or foreign invasion.

1069.
New insur-
rections.

It was not long before they found occupation for their prowess and military conduct. Godwin, Edmond, and Magnus, three sons of Harold, had, immediately after the defeat at Hastings, sought a retreat in Ireland; where, having met with a kind reception from Dermot and other princes of that country, they projected an invasion on England, and they hoped that all the exiles from Denmark, Scotland, and Wales, assisted by forces from these several countries, would at once commence hostilities, and rouse the indignation of the English against their haughty conquerors. They landed in Devonshire; but found Brian, son of the count of Brittany, at the head of some foreign troops, ready to oppose them; and being defeated in several actions, they were obliged to retreat to their ships, and to return with great loss to Ireland³⁵. The efforts of the Normans were now directed to the north, where affairs had fallen into the utmost confusion. The more impatient of the Northumbrians had attacked Robert de Comyn, who was appointed governor

³⁵ Gul. Gemet. p. 290. Order. Vital. p. 513. Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 246.

of Durham ; and gaining the advantage over him from his negligence, they put him to death in that city, with seven hundred of his followers³⁶. This success animated the inhabitants of York, who, rising in arms, flew Robert Fitz-Richard, their governor³⁷; and besieged in the castle, William Mallet, on whom the command now devolved. A little after, the Danish troops landed from 300 vessels: Osberne, brother to king Sweyn, was entrusted with the command of these forces, and he was accompanied by Harold and Canute, two sons of that monarch. Edgar Atheling appeared from Scotland, and brought along with him Cospatric, Waltheof, Siward, Bearne, Merleswain, Adelin, and other leaders, who, partly from the hopes which they gave of Scottish succours, partly from their authority in those parts, easily persuaded the warlike and discontented Northumbrians to join the insurrection. Mallet, that he might better provide for the defence of the citadel of York, set fire to some houses, which lay contiguous; but this expedient proved the immediate cause of his destruction. The flames, spreading into the neighbouring streets, reduced the whole city to ashes: The enraged inhabitants, aided by the Danes, took advantage of the confusion to attack the castle, which they carried by assault;

C H A P.

IV.

1069.

³⁶ Order. Vital. p. 512. Chron. de Mailr. p. 116. Hoveden, p. 450. M. Paris, p. 5. Sim. Dun. p. 198.

³⁷ Order. Vital. p. 512.

C H A P. and the garrison, to the number of 3000 men,
 IV. was put to the sword without mercy ³⁸.
 1069.

THIS success proved a signal to many other parts of England, and gave the people an opportunity of showing their malevolence to the Normans. Hereward, a nobleman in East-Anglia, celebrated for valour, assembled his followers, and taking shelter in the Isle of Ely, made inroads on all the neighbouring country ³⁹. The English in the counties of Somerset and Dorset rose in arms, and assaulted Montacute, the Norman governor; while the inhabitants of Cornwall and Devon invested Exeter, which, from the memory of William's clemency, still remained faithful to him. Edric, the forester, calling in the assistance of the Welsh, laid siege to Shrewsbury, and made head against earl Brient and Fitz-Osborne, who commanded in those quarters ⁴⁰. The English every where, repenting their former easy submission, seemed determined to make by concert one great effort for the recovery of their liberties, and for the expulsion of their oppressors,

WILLIAM, undismayed amidst this scene of confusion, assembled his forces, and animating them with the prospect of new confiscations and forfeitures, he marched against the rebels in the north, whom he regarded as the most formidable, and whose defeat he knew would strike a terror into

³⁸ Order Vital. p. 513. Hoveden, p. 451.

³⁹ Ingulf. p. 71. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 47.

⁴⁰ Order. Vital. p. 514.

all the other malecontents. Joining policy to force, C H A P. V. he tried, before his approach, to weaken the enemy, by detaching the Danes from them; and 1069. he engaged Osberne, by large presents, and by offering him the liberty of plundering the sea-coast, to retire, without committing farther hostilities, into Denmark ⁴¹. Cospatric also, in despair of success, made his peace with the king, and paying a sum of money as an atonement for his insurrection, was received into favour, and even invested with the earldom of Northumberland. Waltheof, who long defended York with great courage, was allured with this appearance of clemency; and as William knew how to esteem valour even in an enemy, that nobleman had no reason to repent of this confidence ⁴². Even Edric, compelled by necessity, submitted to the Conqueror, and received forgiveness, which was soon after followed by some degree of trust and favour. Malcolm, coming too late to support his confederates, was constrained to retire; and all the English rebels in other parts, except Hereward, who still kept in his fastnesses, dispersed themselves, and left the Normans undisputed masters of the kingdom. Edgar Atheling, with his followers, sought again a retreat in Scotland from the pursuit of his enemies.

⁴¹ Hoveden, p. 451. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 47. Sim. Dun. p. 199.

⁴² Malmesb. p. 104. H. Hunt. p. 369.

C H A P.

IV.

1070.

New rigors
of the go-
vernment.

BUT the seeming clemency of William towards the English leaders proceeded only from artifice, or from his esteem of individuals: His heart was hardened against all compassion towards the people; and he scrupled no measure, however violent or severe, which seemed requisite to support his plan of tyrannical administration. Sensible of the restless disposition of the Northumbrians, he determined to incapacitate them ever after from giving him disturbance, and he issued orders for laying entirely waste that fertile country, which, for the extent of sixty miles, lies between the Humber and the Tees⁴³. The houses were reduced to ashes by the merciless Normans; the cattle seized and driven away; the instruments of husbandry destroyed; and the inhabitants compelled either to seek for a subsistence in the southern parts of Scotland, or if they lingered in England, from a reluctance to abandon their ancient habitations, they perished miserably in the woods from cold and hunger. The lives of a hundred thousand persons are computed to have been sacrificed to this stroke of barbarous policy⁴⁴, which, by seeking a remedy for a temporary evil, thus inflicted a lasting wound on the power and populousness of the nation.

⁴³ Chron. Sax. p. 174. Ingulf, p. 79. Malmesb. p. 103. Hoveden, p. 451. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 47. M. Paris, p. 5. Sim. Dun. p. 119. Brompton, p. 966. Knyghton, p. 2344. Anglia Sacra. vol. 1. p. 702.

⁴⁴ Order. Vital. p. 515.

BUT William, finding himself entirely master of a people, who had given him such sensible proofs of their impotent rage and animosity, now resolved to proceed to extremities against all the natives of England; and to reduce them to a condition, in which they should no longer be formidable to his government. The insurrections and conspiracies in so many parts of the kingdom had involved the bulk of the landed proprietors, more or less, in the guilt of treason; and the king took advantage of executing against them, with the utmost rigor, the laws of forfeiture and attainder. Their lives were indeed commonly spared; but their estates were confiscated, and either annexed to the royal demesnes, or conferred with the most profuse bounty on the Normans and other foreigners⁴⁵. While the king's declared intention was to depress or rather entirely extirpate the English gentry⁴⁶, it is easy to believe that scarcely the form of justice would be observed in those violent proceedings⁴⁷; and that any suspicions served as the most undoubted proofs of guilt against a people thus devoted to destruction. It was crime sufficient in an Englishman to be opulent or noble or powerful; and the policy of the king, concurring with the rapacity of foreign adventurers, produced almost a total revolution in the landed property of the kingdom. Ancient and honourable families were reduced to beggary;

⁴⁵ Malmesb. p. 104. ⁴⁶ H. Hunt. p. 370.

⁴⁷ See note [H] at the end of the volume.

C H A P.

IV.

1070.

the nobles themselves were every where treated with ignominy and contempt; they had the mortification of seeing their castles and manors possessed by Normans of the meanest birth and lowest stations⁴⁸; and they found themselves carefully excluded from every road, which led either to riches or preferment⁴⁹.

Introduction
of the feudal
law.

As power naturally follows property, this revolution alone gave great security to the foreigners; but William, by the new institutions which he established, took also care to retain for ever the military authority in those hands, which had enabled him to subdue the kingdom. He introduced into England the feudal law, which he found established in France and Normandy, and which, during that age, was the foundation both of the stability and of the disorders, in most of the monarchical governments of Europe. He divided all the lands of England, with very few exceptions, beside the royal demesnes, into baronies; and he conferred these, with the reservation of stated services and payments, on the most considerable of his adventurers. These great barons, who held immediately of the crown, shared out a great part of their lands to other foreigners, who were denominated knights or vassals, and who paid their lord the same duty and submission in peace and war, which he himself owed to his sovereign. The whole

⁴⁸ Order. Vitalis, p. 521. M. West. p. 229.

⁴⁹ See note [I] at the end of the volume.

kingdom contained about 700 chief tenants, and 60,215 knights-fees⁵⁰; and as none of the native English were admitted into the first rank, the few, who retained their landed property, were glad to be received into the second, and under the protection of some powerful Norman, to load themselves and their posterity with this grievous burthen, for estates which they had received free from their ancestors⁵¹. The small mixture of English, which entered into this civil or military fabric, (for it partook of both species) was so restrained by subordination under the foreigners, that the Norman dominion seemed now to be fixed on the most durable basis; and to defy all the efforts of its enemies.

THE better to unite the parts of the government, and to bind them into one system, which might serve both for defence against foreigners, and for the support of domestic tranquillity, William reduced the ecclesiastical revenues under the same feudal law; and though he had courted the church on his invasion and accession, he now subjected it to services, which the clergy regarded as a grievous slavery, and as totally unbecoming their profession. The bishops and abbots were obliged, when required, to furnish to the king during war a number of

⁵⁰ Order. Vital. p. 523. Secretum Abbatis, apud Selden, Titles of Honour, p. 573. Spellm. Gloss. in verbo *Feodum*. Sir Robert Cotton.

⁵¹ M. West. p. 225. M. Paris, p. 4. Bracton, lib. 1. cap. 11. num. 1. Fleta, lib. 1. cap. 8. n. 2.

G H A P. knights or military tenants; proportioned to the
 IV. extent of property possessed by each fee or abbey;
 1070. and they were liable, in case of failure, to the
 same penalties which were exacted from the laity⁵².
 The pope and the ecclesiastics exclaimed against
 this tyranny, as they called it; but the king's
 authority was so well established over the army,
 who held every thing from his bounty, that
 superstition itself, even in that age, when it was
 most prevalent, was constrained to bend under
 his superior influence.

BUT as the great body of the clergy were still
 natives, the king had much reason to dread the
 effects of their resentment: He therefore used
 the precaution of expelling the English from all
 the considerable dignities, and of advancing
 foreigners in their place. The partiality of the
 Confessor towards the Normans had been so great,
 that, aided by their superior learning, it had
 promoted them to many of the sees in England;
 and even before the period of the conquest,
 scarcely more than six or seven of the prelates
 were natives of the country. But among these
 was Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury; a man,
 who, by his address and vigor, by the great-
 ness of his family and alliances, by the extent of
 his possessions, as well as by the dignity of his
 office, and his authority among the English, gave
 jealousy to the king⁵³. Though William had,
 on his accession, affronted this prelate, by

⁵² M. Paris, p. 5. *Anglia Sacra*, vol. I. p. 248.

⁵³ Parker, p. 161.

employing the archbishop of York to officiate at his consecration, he was careful, on other occasions, to load him with honours and caresses, and to avoid giving him farther offence till the opportunity should offer of effecting his final destruction¹⁴. The suppression of the late rebellions, and the total subjection of the English, made him hope, that an attempt against Stigand, however violent, would be covered by his great successes, and be overlooked amidst the other important revolutions, which affected so deeply the property and liberty of the kingdom. Yet, notwithstanding these great advantages, he did not think it safe to violate the reverence usually paid to the primate, but under cover of a new superstition, which he was the great instrument of introducing into England.

The doctrine, which exalted the papacy above all human power, had gradually diffused itself from the city and court of Rome; and was, during that age, much more prevalent in the southern than in the northern kingdoms of Europe. Pope Alexander, who had assisted William in his conquests, naturally expected, that the French and Normans would import into England, the same reverence for his sacred character, with which they were impressed in their own country; and would break the spiritual, as well as civil independency of the Saxons, who had hitherto conducted their ecclesiastical government, with an acknowledgment indeed of primacy in the see of

C H A P.

IV.

1070.

Innovation
in ecclesiastical govern-
ment.

¹⁴ Parker, p. 164.

G H A P.

IV.

1070.

Rome, but without much idea of its title to dominion or authority. As soon, therefore, as the Norman prince seemed fully established on the throne, the Pope dispatched Ermenfroy, bishop of Sion, as his legate into England; and this prelate was the first that had ever appeared with that character in any part of the British islands. The king, though he was probably led by principle to pay this submission to Rome, determined, as is usual, to employ the incident as a means of serving his political purposes, and of degrading those English prelates, who were become obnoxious to him. The legate submitted to become the instrument of his tyranny; and thought, that the more violent the exertion of power, the more certainly did it confirm the authority of that court, from which he derived his commission. He summoned, therefore, a council of the prelates and abbots at Winchester; and being assisted by two cardinals, Peter and John, he cited before him Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, to answer for his conduct. The primate was accused of three crimes; the holding of the see of Winchester together with that of Canterbury; the officiating in the pall of Robert, his predecessor; and the having received his own pall from Benedict IX. who was afterwards deposed for simony, and for intrusion into the papacy⁵⁵. These crimes of Stigand were mere

⁵⁵ Hoveden. p. 453. Diceto, p. 482. Knyghton, p. 2345. Anglia Sacra. vol. 1. p. 5, 6. Ypod. Neust. p. 438.

pretences;

pretences ; since the first had been a practice not unusual in England , and was never any where subjected to a higher penalty than a resignation of one of the fees ; the second was a pure ceremonial ; and as Benedict was the only pope who then officiated , and his acts were never repealed , all the prelates of the church , especially those who lay at a distance , were excusable for making their applications to him. Stigand's ruin , however , was resolved on , and was prosecuted with great severity. The legate degraded him from his dignity : The king confiscated his estate , and cast him into prison , where he continued , in poverty and want , during the remainder of his life. Like rigor was exercised against the other English prelates : Agelric , bishop of Selesy , and Agelmare , of Elmham , were deposed by the legate , and imprisoned by the king. Many considerable abbots shared the same fate : Egelwin , bishop of Durham , fled the kingdom : Wulstan , of Worcester , a man of an inoffensive character , was the only English prelate that escaped this general proscription ⁵⁶ , and remained in possession of his dignity. Aldred , archbishop of York ,

⁵⁶ Brompton relates , that Wulstan was also deprived by the synod ; but refusing to deliver his pastoral staff and ring to any but the person from whom he first received it , he went immediately to king Edward's tomb , and struck the staff deeply into the stone , that none but himself was able to pull it out : Upon which he was allowed to keep his bishopric. This instance may serve , instead of many , as a specimen of the monkish miracles. See also the Annals of Burton , p. 284.

C H A P. who had set the crown on William's head, had
 IV. died a little before of grief and vexation, and
 1070. had left his malediction to that prince, on account
 of the breach of his coronation-oath, and of the
 extreme tyranny with which, he saw, he was
 determined to treat his English subjects ⁵⁷.

It was a fixed maxim in this reign, as well
 as in some of the subsequent, that no native of
 the island should ever be advanced to any *dignity*,
 ecclesiastical, civil, or military ⁵⁸. The king
 therefore, upon Stigand's deposition, promoted
 Lanfranc, a Milanese monk, celebrated for his
 learning and piety, to the vacant see. This
 prelate was rigid in defending the prerogatives
 of his station; and after a long process before
 the pope, he obliged Thomas, a Norman monk,
 who had been appointed to the see of York,
 to acknowledge the primacy of the archbishop of
 Canterbury. Where ambition can be so happy
 as to cover its enterprizes, even to the person
 himself, under the appearance of principle, it is
 the most incurable and inflexible of all human
 passions. Hence Lanfranc's zeal in promoting
 the interests of the papacy, by which he himself
 augmented his own authority, was indefatigable;
 and met with proportionable success. The devoted
 attachment to Rome continually increased in
 England; and being favoured by the sentiments
 of the conquerors, as well as by the monastic

⁵⁷ Malmes. de gest. Pont. p. 154.

⁵⁸ Ingulf, p. 70, 71.

establiſhments formerly introduced by Edred and by Edgar, it ſoon reached the ſame height, at which it had, during ſome time, ſtood in France and Italy ⁵⁹. It afterwards went much farther; being favoured by that very remote ſituation, which had at firſt obſtructed its progreſs; and being leſs checked by knowledge and a liberal education, which were ſtill ſomewhat more common in the ſouthern countries.

C H A P.
IV.
1070.

THE prevalence of this ſuperſtitious ſpirit became dangerous to ſome of William's ſucceſſors, and incommodious to moſt of them: But the arbitrary ſway of this king over the Engliſh, and his extenſive authority over the foreigners, kept him from feeling any immediate inconveniencies from it. He retained the church in great ſubjection, as well as his lay-ſubjects; and would allow none, of whatever character, to diſpute his ſovereign will and pleaſure. He prohibited his ſubjects from acknowledging any one for pope whom he himſelf had not previously received: He required, that all the eccleſiaſtical canons, voted in any ſynod, ſhould firſt be laid before him, and be ratified by his authority: Even bulls or letters from Rome could not legally be produced, till they received the ſame ſanction: And none of his miniſters or barons, whatever offences they were guilty of, could be ſubjected

⁵⁹ M. Weſt. p. 228. Lanfranc wrote in defence of the real preſence againſt Berengarius; and in thoſe ages of ſtupidity and ignorance, he was greatly applauded for that performance.

C H A P. to spiritual censures, till he himself had given
 IV. his consent to their excommunication ⁶⁰. These
 1070. regulations were worthy of a sovereign, and
 kept united the civil and ecclesiastical powers,
 which the principles, introduced by this prince
 himself, had an immediate tendency to separate.

BUT the English had the cruel mortification to
 find, that their king's authority, however acquired
 or however extended, was all employed in their
 oppression; and that the scheme of their sub-
 jection, attended with every circumstance of
 insult and indignity ⁶¹, was deliberately formed
 by the prince, and wantonly prosecuted by his
 followers ⁶². William had even entertained the
 difficult project of totally abolishing the English
 language; and, for that purpose, he ordered,
 that, in all schools throughout the kingdom,
 the youth should be instructed in the French
 tongue, a practice which was continued from
 custom till after the reign of Edward III. and
 was never indeed totally discontinued in England.
 The pleadings in the supreme courts of judicature
 were in French ⁶³: The deeds were often drawn
 in the same language: The laws were composed
 in that idiom ⁶⁴: No other tongue was used at
 court: It became the language of all fashionable

⁶⁰ Eadmer, p. 6. ⁶¹ Order. Vital. p. 523. H. Hunt.
 p. 370. ⁶² Ingulf. p. 71.

⁶³ 36. Ed. III. cap. 15. Selden. Spicileg. ad Eadmer,
 p. 189. Fortescue de laud. leg. Angl. cap. 48.

⁶⁴ Chron. Rothom. A. D. 1066.

company ; and the English themselves , ashamed of their own country , affected to excel in that foreign dialect. From this attention of William , and from the extensive foreign dominions , long annexed to the crown of England , proceeded that mixture of French , which is at present to be found in the English tongue , and which composes the greatest and best part of our language. But amidst those endeavours to depress the English nation , the king , moved by the remonstrances of some of his prelates , and by the earnest desires of the people , restored a few of the laws of king Edward [“] ; which , though seemingly of no great importance towards the protection of general liberty , gave them extreme satisfaction , as a memorial of their ancient government , and an unusual mark of complaisance in their imperious conquerors [“].

THE situation of the two great earls , Morcar and Edwin , became now very disagreeable. Though they had retained their allegiance , during this general insurrection of their countrymen , they had not gained the king's confidence , and they found themselves exposed to the malignity of the courtiers , who envied them on account of their opulence and greatness , and at the same time involved them in that general contempt which they entertained for the English. Sensible that they

1071.

[“] Ingulf, p. 88. Brompton , p. 982. Knyghton , p. 2355. Hoveden , p. 600. [“] See note [K] at the end of the volume.

C H A P. had entirely lost their dignity, and could not
IV. even hope to remain long in safety; they deter-
1071. mined, though too late, to share the same fate
with their countrymen. While Edwin retired to
his estate in the north, with a view of commen-
cing an insurrection, Morcar took shelter in the
Isle of Ely with the brave Hereward, who,
secured by the inaccessible situation of the place,
still defended himself against the Normans. But
this attempt served only to accelerate the ruin of
the few English, who had hitherto been able to
preserve their rank or fortune during the past
convulsions. William employed all his endeavours
to subdue the Isle of Ely; and having surrounded
it with flat-bottomed boats, and made a causeway
through the morasses to the extent of two miles,
he obliged the rebels to surrender at discretion.
Hereward alone forced his way, sword in hand,
through the enemy; and still continued his
hostilities by sea against the Normans, till at last
William, charmed with his bravery, received
him into favour, and restored him to his estate. Earl
Morcar, and Egelwin, bishop of Durham, who
had joined the malecontents, were thrown into
prison, and the latter soon after died in confinement.
Edwin, attempting to make his escape into
Scotland, was betrayed by some of his followers,
and was killed by a party of Normans, to the
great affliction of the English, and even to that
of William, who paid a tribute of generous
tears to the memory of this gallant and beautiful
youth. The king of Scotland, in hopes of

profiting by these convulsions, had fallen upon the northern counties; but on the approach of William he retired; and when the king entered his country, he was glad to make peace, and to pay the usual homage to the English crown. To complete the king's prosperity, Edgar Atheling himself, despairing of success, and weary of a fugitive life, submitted to his enemy; and receiving a decent pension for his subsistence, was permitted to live in England unmolested. But these acts of generosity towards the leaders were disgraced, as usual, by William's rigor against the inferior malecontents. He ordered the hands to be lopt off, and the eyes to be put out, of many of the prisoners, whom he had taken in the Isle of Ely; and he dispersed them in that miserable condition throughout the country, as monuments of his severity.

THE province of Maine in France had, by the will of Hebert, the last count, fallen under the dominion of William some years before his conquest of England; but the inhabitants, dissatisfied with the Norman government, and instigated by Fulk count of Anjou, who had some pretensions to the succession, now rose in rebellion, and expelled the magistrates, whom the king had placed over them. The full settlement of England afforded him leisure to punish this insult on his authority; but being unwilling to remove his Norman forces from this island, he carried over a considerable army, composed almost entirely of English, and joining them to some

C H A P.
IV.

1073.

C H A P. troops levied in Normandy, he entered the revolted
 IV. province. The English appeared ambitious of distinguishing themselves on this occasion, and of retrieving that character of valour, which had long been national among them; but which their late easy subjection under the Normans had somewhat degraded and obscured. Perhaps too they hoped that, by their zeal and activity, they might recover the confidence of their sovereign, as their ancestors had formerly, by like means, gained the affections of Canute; and might conquer his inveterate prejudices in favour of his own countrymen. The king's military conduct, seconded by these brave troops, soon overcame all opposition in Maine: The inhabitants were obliged to submit, and the count of Anjou relinquished his pretensions.

1074.
 Infurrection
 of the Nor-
 man barons.

BUT during these transactions, the government of England was greatly disturbed; and that too by those very foreigners, who owed every thing to the king's bounty, and who were the sole object of his friendship and regard. The Norman barons, who had engaged with their duke in the conquest of England, were men of the most independent spirit; and though they obeyed their leader in the field, they would have regarded with disdain the richest acquisitions, had they been required, in return, to submit, in their civil government, to the arbitrary will of one man. But the imperious character of William, encouraged by his absolute dominion over the English, and often impelled by the necessity of

his affairs, had prompted him to stretch his C H A P. authority over the Normans themselves beyond IV. what the free genius of that victorious people 1074. could easily bear. The discontents were become general among those haughty nobles; and even Roger, earl of Hereford, son and heir of Fitz-Osborne, the king's chief favourite, was strongly infected with them. This nobleman, intending to marry his sister to Ralph de Guader, earl of Norfolk, had thought it his duty to inform the king of his purpose, and to desire the royal consent; but meeting with a refusal, he proceeded nevertheless to complete the nuptials, and assembled all his friends, and those of Guader, to attend the solemnity. The two earls, disgusted by the denial of their request, and dreading William's resentment for their disobedience, here prepared measures for a revolt; and during the gaiety of the festival, while the company was heated with wine, they opened the design to their guests. They inveighed against the arbitrary conduct of the king; his tyranny over the English, whom they affected on this occasion to commiserate; his imperious behaviour to his barons of the noblest birth; and his apparent intention of reducing the victors and the vanquished to a like ignominious servitude. Amidst their complaints, the indignity of submitting to a bastard " was

" William was so little ashamed of his birth, that he assumed the appellation of Bastard in some of his letters and charters. Spellm. Gloss. in verb. *Bastardus*. Camden in *Richmondsbire*.

O H A P. not forgotten; the certain prospect of success in a
 IV. revolt, by the assistance of the Danes and the
 1074. discontented English, was insisted on; and the
 whole company, inflamed with the same senti-
 ments, and warmed by the jollity of the enter-
 tainment, entered, by a solemn engagement,
 into the design of shaking off the royal authority.
 Even earl Waltheof, who was present, incon-
 siderately expressed his approbation of the con-
 spiracy, and promised his concurrence towards
 its success.

THIS nobleman, the last of the English, who,
 for some generations, possessed any power or
 authority, had after his capitulation at York,
 been received into favour by the Conqueror;
 had even married Judith, niece to that prince;
 and had been promoted to the earldoms of
 Huntingdon and Northampton⁶⁸. Cospatric, earl
 of Northumberland, having, on some new disgust
 from William, retired into Scotland, where he
 received the earldom of Dunbar from the bounty
 of Malcolm; Waltheof was appointed his successor
 in that important command, and seemed still to
 possess the confidence and friendship of his
 sovereign⁶⁹. But as he was a man of generous
 principles, and loved his country, it is probable,
 that the tyranny exercised over the English lay
 heavy upon his mind, and destroyed all the
 satisfaction, which he could reap from his own

⁶⁸ Order. Vital. p. 522. Hoveden. p. 454.

⁶⁹ Sim. Dun. p. 205.

grandeur and advancement. When a prospect, therefore, was opened of retrieving their liberty, he hastily embraced it; while the fumes of the liquor, and the ardour of the company, prevented him from reflecting on the consequences of that rash attempt. But after his cool judgment returned, he foresaw, that the conspiracy of those discontented barons was not likely to prove successful against the established power of William; or if it did, that the slavery of the English, instead of being alleviated by that event, would become more grievous, under a multitude of foreign leaders, factious and ambitious, whose union and whose discord would be equally oppressive to the people. Tormented with these reflections, he opened his mind to his wife, Judith, of whose fidelity he entertained no suspicion, but who, having secretly fixed her affections on another, took this opportunity of ruining her easy and credulous husband. She conveyed intelligence of the conspiracy to the king, and aggravated every circumstance, which, she believed, would tend to incense him against Waltheof, and render him absolutely implacable⁷⁰. Meanwhile, the earl, still dubious with regard to the part which he should act, discovered the secret in confession to Lanfranc, on whose probity and judgment he had a great reliance: He was persuaded by the prelate, that he owed no fidelity to those rebellious barons, who had by surprise gained his consent to a crime; that his

⁷⁰ Order. Vital. p. 536.

C H A P. first duty was to his sovereign and benefactor,
 IV. his next to himself and his family; and that, if
 1074. he seized not the opportunity of making atone-
 ment for his guilt, by revealing it, the temerity
 of the conspirators was so great, that they would
 give some other person the means of acquiring
 the merit of the discovery. Waltheof, convinced
 by these arguments, went over to Normandy;
 but, though he was well received by the king,
 and thanked for his fidelity, the account, pre-
 viously transmitted by Judith, had sunk deep
 into William's mind, and had destroyed all the
 merit of her husband's repentance.

THE conspirators, hearing of Waltheof's
 departure, immediately concluded their design to
 be betrayed; and they flew to arms, before their
 schemes were ripe for execution, and before the
 arrival of the Danes, in whose aid they placed
 their chief confidence. The earl of Hereford was
 checked by Walter de Lacy, a great baron in
 those parts, who, supported by the bishop of
 Worcester and the abbot of Evesham, raised
 some forces, and prevented the earl from passing
 the Severne, or advancing into the heart of the
 kingdom. The earl of Norfolk was defeated at
 Fagadun, near Cambridge, by Odo, the regent,
 assisted by Richard de Bienfaite, and William de
 Warrenne, the two justiciaries. The prisoners
 taken in this action had their right foot cut off,
 as a punishment of their treason: The earl him-
 self escaped to Norwich, thence to Denmark;
 where the Danish fleet, which had made an

unsuccessful attempt upon the coast of England⁷¹, soon after arrived, and brought him intelligence, that all his confederates were suppressed, and were either killed, banished, or taken prisoners⁷². Ralph retired in despair to Brittany, where he possessed a large estate, and extensive jurisdictions.

THE king, who hastened over to England, in order to suppress the insurrection, found, that nothing remained but the punishment of the criminals, which he executed with great severity. Many of the rebels were hanged; some had their eyes put out; others their hands cut off. But William, agreeably to his usual maxims, showed more lenity to their leader, the earl of Hereford, who was only condemned to a forfeiture of his estate, and to imprisonment during pleasure. The king seemed even disposed to remit this last part of the punishment; had not Roger, by a fresh insolence, provoked him to render his confinement perpetual. But Waltheof, being an Englishman, was not treated with so much humanity; though his guilt, always much inferior to that of the other conspirators, was atoned for by an early repentance and return to his duty. William, instigated by his niece, as well as by his rapacious courtiers, who longed for so rich a

1075.

⁷¹ Chron. Sax. p. 183. M. Paris, p. 7.

⁷² Many of the fugitive Normans are supposed to have fled into Scotland; where they were protected, as well as the fugitive English, by Malcolm. Whence come the many French and Norman families, which are found at present in that country.

C H A P. forfeiture, ordered him to be tried, condemned,
 IV. and executed. The English, who considered this
 1075. nobleman as the last resource of their nation,
 29th April. grievously lamented his fate, and fancied that
 miracles were wrought by his reliques, as a
 testimony of his innocence and sanctity. The
 infamous Judith, falling soon after under the
 king's displeasure, was abandoned by all the
 world, and passed the rest of her life in con-
 tempt, remorse, and misery.

NOTHING remained to complete William's
 satisfaction but the punishment of Ralph de
 Guader; and he hastened over to Normandy,
 in order to gratify his vengeance on that criminal.
 But though the contest seemed very unequal
 between a private nobleman and the king of
 England, Ralph was so well supported both by
 the earl of Brittany and the King of France,
 that William, after besieging him for some time
 in Dol, was obliged to abandon the enterprize,
 and make with those powerful princes a peace,
 in which Ralph himself was included. England,
 during his absence, remained in tranquillity; and
 nothing remarkable occurred, except two eccle-
 siastical synods, which were summoned, one at
 London, another at Winchester. In the former,
 the precedency among the episcopal sees was
 settled, and the seat of some of them was
 removed from small villages to the most con-
 siderable town within the diocese. In the second
 was transacted a business of more importance.

THE industry and perseverance are surprising, with which the popes had been treasuring up powers and pretensions during so many ages of ignorance; while each pontiff employed every fraud for advancing purposes of imaginary piety, and cherished all claims which might turn to the advantage of his successors, though he himself could not expect ever to reap any benefit from them. All this immense store of spiritual and civil authority was now devolved on Gregory VII. of the name of Hildebrand, the most enterprising pontiff that had ever filled that chair, and the least restrained by fear, decency, or moderation. Not content with shaking off the yoke of the emperors, who had hitherto exercised the power of appointing the pope on every vacancy, at least of ratifying his election; he undertook the arduous task of entirely disjoining the ecclesiastical from the civil power, and of excluding profane laymen from the right which they had assumed, of filling the vacancies of bishoprics, abbies, and other spiritual dignities⁷³. The sovereigns, who had long exercised this power, and who had acquired it, not by encroachments on the church, but on the people, to whom it originally belonged⁷⁴, made great opposition to this claim of the court of Rome; and Henry IV. the reigning emperor defended this prerogative of his crown with a vigor and resolution suitable to its importance.

C H A P.

IV.

1076.

Dispute about investitures.

⁷³ L'Abbé Conc. tom. 10. p. 371, 372. com. 2.

⁷⁴ Padre Paolo sopra i benef. eccles. p. 30.

C H A P. The few offices, either civil or military, which
IV. the feudal institutions left the sovereign the power
1076. of bestowing, made the prerogative of conferring
the pastoral ring and staff the most valuable
jewel of the royal diadem; especially as the
general ignorance of the age bestowed a conse-
quence on the ecclesiastical offices, even beyond
the great extent of power and property which
belonged to them. Superstition, the child of
ignorance, invested the clergy with an authority
almost sacred; and as they ingrossed the little
learning of the age, their interposition became
requisite in all civil business, and a real usefulness
in common life was thus superadded to the
spiritual sanctity of their character.

WHEN the usurpations, therefore, of the church
had come to such maturity as to embolden her
to attempt extorting the right of investitures from
the temporal power, Europe, especially Italy
and Germany, was thrown into the most violent
convulsions, and the pope and the emperor
waged implacable war on each other. Gregory
dared to fulminate the sentence of excommunica-
tion against Henry and his adherents, to pronounce
him rightfully deposed, to free his subjects from
their oaths of allegiance; and, instead of shocking
mankind by this gross encroachment on the
civil authority, he found the stupid people ready
to second his most exorbitant pretensions. Every
minister, servant, or vassal of the emperor, who
received any disgust, covered his rebellion
under the pretence of principle; and even the
mother

mother of this monarch, forgetting all the ties of nature, was seduced to countenance the insolence of his enemies. Princes themselves, not attentive to the pernicious consequences of those papal claims, employed them for their present purposes: And the controversy, spreading into every city of Italy, engendered the parties of Guelf and Ghibbelin; the most durable and most inveterate factions that ever arose from the mixture of ambition and religious zeal. Besides numberless assassinations, tumults, and convulsions, to which they gave rise, it is computed that the quarrel occasioned no less than sixty battles in the reign of Henry IV. and eighteen in that of his successor, Henry V. when the claims of the sovereign pontiff finally prevailed⁷⁵.

C H A P.

IV.

1076.

BUT the bold spirit of Gregory, not dismayed with the vigorous opposition, which he met with from the emperor, extended his usurpations all over Europe; and well knowing the nature of mankind, whose blind astonishment ever inclines them to yield to the most impudent pretensions, he seemed determined to set no bounds to the spiritual, or rather temporal monarchy, which he had undertaken to erect. He pronounced the sentence of excommunication against Nicephorus, emperor of the East; Robert Guiscard, the adventurous Norman, who had acquired the dominion of Naples, was attacked by the same dangerous weapon: He degraded

⁷⁵ Padre Paolo sopra i benef. eccles. p. 113.

C H A P. IV. 1076. Boleſlas, king of Poland, from the rank of king; and even deprived Poland of the title of a kingdom: He attempted to treat Philip, king of France with the ſame rigor, which he had employed againſt the emperor⁷⁶: He pretended to the entire property and dominion of Spain; and he parcelled it out amongſt adventurers, who undertook to conquer it from the Saracens, and to hold it in vaſſalage under the fee of Rome⁷⁷: Even the Chriſtian biſhops, on whoſe aid he relied for ſubduing the temporal princes, ſaw that he was determined to reduce them to ſervitude; and by aſſuming the whole legiſlative and judicial power of the church, to center all authority in the ſovereign pontiff⁷⁸.

WILLIAM the Conqueror, the moſt potent, the moſt haughty, and the moſt vigorous prince in Europe, was not, amidſt all his ſplendid ſucceſſes, ſecure from the attacks of this enterpriſing pontiff. Gregory wrote him a letter, requiring him to fulfil his promiſe in doing homage for the kingdom of England to the fee of Rome, and to ſend him over that tribute, which all his predeceſſors had been accuſtomed to pay to the vicar of Chriſt. By the tribute, he meant Peter's pence; which, though at firſt a charitable donation of the Saxon princes, was interpreted, according to the uſual practice of the Romiſh

⁷⁶ Epift. Greg. VII. epift. 32. 35. lib. 2. epift. 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid. lib. 1. epift. 7.

⁷⁸ Ibid. lib. 2. epift. 55.

court, to be a badge of subjection acknowledged by the kingdom. William replied, that the money should be remitted as usual; but that neither had he promised to do homage to Rome, nor was it in the least his purpose to impose that servitude on his state⁷⁹. And the better to show Gregory his independence, he ventured, notwithstanding the frequent complaints of the pope, to refuse to the English bishops the liberty of attending a general council, which that pontiff had summoned against his enemies.

BUT though the king displayed this vigor in supporting the royal dignity, he was infected with the general superstition of the age, and he did not perceive the ambitious scope of those institutions, which, under colour of strictness in religion, were introduced or promoted by the court of Rome. Gregory, while he was throwing all Europe into combustion by his violence and impostures, affected an anxious care for the purity of manners; and even the chaste pleasures of the marriage-bed were inconsistent, in his opinion, with the sanctity of the sacerdotal character. He had issued a decree prohibiting the marriage of priests, excommunicating all clergymen who retained their wives, declaring such unlawful commerce to be fornication, and rendering it criminal in the laity to attend divine worship, when such profane priests officiated at the

⁷⁹ Spicileg. Seldeni ad Eadmer, p. 4.

C H A P. altar⁸⁰. This point was a great object in the
 IV. politics of the Roman pontiffs; and it cost them
 1076. infinitely more pains to establish it than the
 propagation of any speculative absurdity, which they had ever attempted to introduce. Many synods were summoned in different parts of Europe, before it was finally settled; and it was there constantly remarked, that the younger clergymen complied chearfully with the pope's decrees in this particular, and that the chief reluctance appeared in those who were more advanced in years: An event so little consonant to men's natural expectations, that it could not fail to be glossed on, even in that blind and superstitious age. William allowed the pope's legate to assemble, in his absence, a synod at Winchester, in order to establish the celibacy of the clergy; but the church of England could not yet be carried the whole length expected. The synod was content with decreeing, that the bishops should not thenceforth ordain any priests or deacons without exacting from them a promise of celibacy; but they enacted, that none, except those who belonged to collegiate or cathedral churches, should be obliged to separate from their wives.

THE king passed some years in Normandy; but his long residence there was not entirely owing to his declared preference of that dutchy: His presence

Revolt of
 prince Robert.

⁸⁰ Hoveden, p. 455. 457. Flor. Wigorn. p. 638. Spell. Concil. fol. 13. A. D. 1076.

was also necessary for composing those disturbances, which had arisen in that favourite territory, and which had even originally proceeded from his own family. Robert, his eldest son, surnamed Gambaron or Courthose, from his short legs, was a prince, who inherited all the bravery of his family and nation; but without that policy and dissimulation, by which his father was so much distinguished, and which, no less than his military valour, had contributed to his great successes. Greedy of fame, impatient of contradiction, without reserve in his friendships, declared in his enmities, this prince could endure no controul even from his imperious father, and openly aspired to that independence, to which his temper, as well as some circumstances in his situation, strongly invited him⁸¹. When William first received the submissions of the province of Maine, he had promised the inhabitants, that Robert should be their prince; and before he undertook the expedition against England, he had on the application of the French court, declared him his successor in Normandy, and had obliged the barons of that duchy to do him homage as their future sovereign. By this artifice, he had endeavoured to appease the jealousy of his neighbours, as affording them a prospect of separating England from his dominions on the continent; but when Robert demanded of him the execution of those engagements, he gave him an absolute refusal, and told him, according

⁸¹ Order. Vital. p. 545. Hoveden, p. 457. Flor. Wigorn. p. 639.

C H. A P.
IV.
1076.

to the homely saying, that he never intended to throw off his cloaths, till he went to bed⁸². Robert openly declared his discontent; and was suspected of secretly instigating the king of France and the earl of Brittany to the opposition, which they made to William, and which had formerly frustrated his attempts upon the town of Dol. And as the quarrel still augmented, Robert proceeded to entertain a strong jealousy of his two surviving brothers, William and Henry, (for Richard was killed in hunting, by a stag) who, by greater submission and complaisance, had acquired the affections of their father. In this disposition, on both sides, the greatest trifle sufficed to produce a rupture between them.

THE three princes, residing with their father in the castle of l'Aigle in Normandy, were one day engaged in sport together; and after some mirth and jollity, the two younger took a fancy of throwing over some water on Robert as he passed through the court on leaving their apartment⁸³; a frolic, which he would naturally have regarded as innocent, had it not been for the suggestions of Alberic de Grentmesnil, son of that Hugh de Grentmesnil, whom William had formerly deprived of his fortunes, when that baron deserted him during his greatest difficulties in England. The young man, mindful of the injury, persuaded the prince, that this action was meant as a public affront, which it behoved him in honour to resent; and the choleric Robert,

⁸² Chron. de Mailr. p. 160.

⁸³ Order. Vital. p. 545.

drawing his sword, ran up stairs, with an intention of taking revenge on his brothers ⁸⁴. The whole castle was filled with tumult, which the king himself, who hastened from his apartment, found some difficulty to appease. But he could by no means appease the resentment of his eldest son, who, complaining of his partiality, and fancying that no proper atonement had been made him for the insult, left the court that very evening, and hastened to Roën, with an intention of seizing the citadel of that place ⁸⁵. But being disappointed in this view by the precaution and vigilance of Roger de Ivery, the governor, he fled to Hugh de Neufchatel, a powerful Norman baron, who gave him protection in his castles; and he openly levied war against his father ⁸⁶. The popular character of the prince, and a similarity of manners, engaged all the young nobility of Normandy and Maine, as well as of Anjou and Brittany, to take part with him; and it was suspected that Matilda, his mother, whose favourite he was, supported him in his rebellion by secret remittances of money, and by the encouragement which she gave his partisans.

ALL the hereditary provinces of William, as well as his family, were during several years thrown into convulsions by this war, and he was at last

1079.

⁸⁴ Order. Vital. p. 545. ⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid. Hoveden, p. 457. Sim. Dun. p. 210. Diceto, p. 487.

C H A P. obliged to have recourse to England, where
 IV. that species of military government, which he
 1079. had established, gave him greater authority than
 the ancient feudal institutions permitted him to
 exercise in Normandy. He called over an army
 of English under his ancient captains, who soon
 expelled Robert and his adherents from their
 retreats, and restored the authority of the sover-
 eign in all his dominions. The young prince
 was obliged to take shelter in the castle of
 Gerberoy in the Beauvoisis, which the king of
 France, who secretly fomented all these dissensions,
 had provided for him. In this fortress he was close-
 ly besieged by his father, against whom, having
 a strong garrison, he made an obstinate defence.
 There passed under the walls of this place many
 rencounters, which resembled more the single
 combats of chivalry, than the military actions
 of armies; but one of them was remarkable for its
 circumstances and its event. Robert happened
 to engage the king, who was concealed by his
 helmet; and both of them being valiant, a fierce
 combat ensued, till at last the young prince
 wounded his father in the arm, and unhorsed
 him. On his calling out for assistance, his
 voice discovered him to his son, who, struck
 with remorse for his past guilt, and astonished
 with the apprehensions of one much greater,
 which he had so nearly incurred, instantly threw
 himself at his father's feet, craved pardon for
 his offences, and offered to purchase forgiveness

by any atonement⁸⁷. The resentment, harboured by William, was so implacable, that he did not immediately correspond to this dutiful submission of his son with like tenderness; but giving him his malediction, departed for his own camp, on Robert's horse, which that prince had assisted him to mount. He soon after raised the siege, and marched with his army to Normandy; where the interposition of the queen and other common friends brought about a reconciliation, which was probably not a little forwarded by the generosity of the son's behaviour in this action, and by the returning sense of his past misconduct. The king seemed so fully appeased that he even took Robert with him into England; where he intrusted him with the command of an army, in order to repel an inroad of Malcolm, king of Scotland, and to retaliate by a like inroad into that country. The Welsh, unable to resist William's power, were, about the same time, necessitated to pay a compensation for their incursions; and every thing was reduced to full tranquillity in this island.

THIS state of affairs gave William leisure to begin and finish an undertaking, which proves his extensive genius, and does honour to his memory: It was a general survey of all the lands in the kingdom, their extent in each

1081.
Doomsday-
book.

⁸⁷ Malmesb. p. 106. H. Hunt. p. 369. Hoveden, p. 457. Flor. Wig. p. 639. Sim. Dun. p. 210. Diceto, p. 287. Knyghton. p. 2351. Alur. Beverl. p. 135.

C H A P. district, their proprietors, tenures, value; the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood, and arable land, which they contained; and in some counties the number of tenants, cottagers, and slaves of all denominations, who lived upon them. He appointed commissioners for this purpose, who entered every particular in their register by the verdict of juries; and after a labour of six years (for the work was so long in finishing) brought him an exact account of all the landed property of his kingdom²⁸. This monument, called Doomday-book, the most valuable piece of antiquity possessed by any nation, is still preserved in the Exchequer; and though only some extracts of it have hitherto been published, it serves to illustrate to us in many particulars the ancient state of England. The great Alfred had finished a like survey of the kingdom, in his time, which was long kept at Winchester, and which probably served as a model to William in this undertaking²⁹.

THE king was naturally a great œconomist; and though no prince had ever been more bountiful to his officers and servants, it was merely because he had rendered himself universal propri-

²⁸ Chron. Sax. p. 190. Ingulf, p. 79. Chron. T. Tykes, p. 23. H. Hunt. p. 370. Hoveden, p. 460. M. West. p. 229. Flor. Wigorn. p. 641. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 51. M. Paris, p. 8. The more northern counties were not comprehended in this survey; I suppose because of their wild, uncultivated state. ²⁹ Ingulf, p. 8.

etor of England, and had a whole kingdom to bestow. He reserved an ample revenue for the crown; and in the general distribution of land among his followers, he kept possession of no less than 1422 manors in different parts of England⁹⁰, which paid him rent either in money, or in corn, cattle, and the usual produce of the soil. An ancient historian computes, that his annual fixed income, besides escheats, fines, reliefs, and other casual profits to a great value, amounted to near 400,000 pounds a-year⁹¹; a sum, which, if all circumstances be attended to, will appear wholly incredible. A pound in that age, as we have already observed, contained three times the weight of silver that it does at present; and the same weight of silver, by the most probable computation, would purchase near ten times more of the necessaries of life, though not in the same proportion of the finer manufactures. This revenue, therefore, of William would be equal to at least nine or ten millions at present; and as that prince had neither fleet nor army to support; the former being only an occasional expence, and the latter being maintained, without any charge to him, by his military vassals, we must thence conclude, that no emperor or prince, in any age or nation, can be compared to the Conqueror for opulence and riches. This leads us to suspect a great

C H A P.
 IV.
 1081.

⁹⁰ West's enquiry into the manner of creating peers, p. 24.

⁹¹ Order. Vital. p. 523. He says 1060 pounds and some odd shillings and pence a-day.

C H A P. mistake in the computation of the historian ;
 IV. though, if we consider that avarice is always
 1081. imputed to William as one of his vices, and
 that, having by the sword rendered himself master
 of all the lands in the kingdom, he would
 certainly in the partition retain a great propor-
 tion for his own share; we can scarcely be guilty
 of any error in asserting, that perhaps no king
 of England was ever more opulent, was more
 able to support by his revenue the splendor
 and magnificence of a court, or could bestow
 more on his pleasures or in liberalities to his
 servants and favourites⁹².

The new-
 forest.

THERE was one pleasure, to which William, as well as all the Normans and ancient Saxons, was extremely addicted; and that was hunting: But this pleasure he indulged more at the expence of his unhappy subjects, whose interests he always disregarded, than to the loss or diminution of his own revenue. Not content with those large forests, which former kings possessed in all parts of England; he resolved to make a new forest near Winchester, the usual place of his residence: And for that purpose, he laid waste the country in Hampshire for an extent of thirty miles, expelled the inhabitants from their houses, seized their property, even demolished churches and convents and made the sufferers no compensation for the injury⁹³. At the same time, he enacted

⁹² Fortescue, de Dom. reg. et politic. cap. III.

⁹³ Malmes. p. 3. H. Hunt. p. 731. Anglia Sacra, vol. I. p. 258.

new laws, by which he prohibited all his subjects from hunting in any of his forests, and rendered the penalties more severe than ever had been inflicted for such offences. The killing of a deer or boar, or even a hare, was punished with the loss of the delinquent's eyes; and that at a time, when the killing of a man could be atoned for by paying a moderate fine or composition.

THE transactions, recorded during the remainder of this reign, may be considered more as domestic occurrences, which concern the prince, than as national events, which regard England. Odo, bishop of Baieux, the king's uterine brother, whom he had created earl of Kent, and entrusted with a great share of power during his whole reign, had amassed immense riches; and agreeably to the usual progress of human wishes, he began to regard his present acquisitions but as a step to farther grandeur. He had formed the chimerical project of buying the papacy; and though Gregory, the reigning pope, was not of advanced years, the prelate had confided so much in the predictions of an astrologer, that he reckoned upon the pontiff's death, and upon attaining, by his own intrigues and money, that envied state of greatness. Resolving, therefore, to remit all his riches to Italy, he had persuaded many considerable barons, and among the rest, Hugh earl of Chester, to take the same course; in hopes, that, when he should mount the papal throne, he would bestow on them more considerable establishments in that country. The

C H A P. king, from whom all these projects had been
 IV. carefully concealed, at last got intelligence of
 1082. the design, and ordered Odo to be arrested. His officers, from respect to the immunities, which the ecclesiastics now assumed, scrupled to execute the command, till the king himself was obliged in person to seize him; and when Odo insisted that he was a prelate, and exempt from all temporal jurisdiction, William replied, that he arrested him, not as bishop of Baieux, but as earl of Kent. He was sent prisoner to Normandy; and notwithstanding the remonstrances and menaces of Gregory, was detained in custody during the remainder of this reign.

1083.

ANOTHER domestic event gave the king much more concern: It was the death of Matilda, his consort, whom he tenderly loved, and for whom he had ever preserved the most sincere friendship. Three years afterwards he passed into Normandy, and carried with him Edgar Atheling, to whom he willingly granted permission to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He was detained on the continent by a misunderstanding, which broke out between him and the king of France, and which was occasioned by inroads made into Normandy by some French barons on the frontiers. It was little in the power of princes at that time to restrain their licentious nobility; but William suspected, that these barons durst not have provoked his indignation, had they not been assured of the countenance and protection of Philip. His displeasure was increased by the account he

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War with
 France.

received of some railleries which that monarch had thrown out against him. William, who was become corpulent, had been detained in bed some time by sickness; upon which Philip expressed his surprise, that his brother of England should be so long in being delivered of his big belly. The king sent him word, that, as soon as he was up, he would present so many lights at Notre-dame, as would perhaps give little pleasure to the king of France; alluding to the usual practice at that time of women after childbirth. Immediately on his recovery, he led an army into l'Isle de France, and laid every thing waste with fire and sword. He took the town of Mante, which he reduced to ashes. But the progress of these hostilities was stopped by an accident, which soon after put an end to William's life. His horse starting aside of a sudden, he bruised his belly on the pommel of the saddle; and being in a bad habit of body, as well as somewhat advanced in years, he began to apprehend the consequences, and ordered himself to be carried in a litter to the monastery of St. Gervais. Finding his illness increase, and being sensible of the approach of death, he discovered at last the vanity of all human grandeur, and was struck with remorse for those horrible cruelties and acts of violence, which in the attainment and defence of it, he had committed during the course of his reign over England. He endeavoured to make atonement by presents to churches and monasteries; and he issued orders, that

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Deathand charac-
ter of Wil-
liam the
Conqueror.

earl Morcar, Siward Bearne, and other English prisoners, should be set at liberty. He was even prevailed on, though not without reluctance, to consent, with his dying breath, to release his brother, Odo, against whom he was extremely incensed. He left Normandy and Maine to his eldest son, Robert: He wrote to Lanfranc, desiring him to crown William king of England: He bequeathed to Henry nothing but the possessions of his mother, Matilda; but foretold, that he would one day surpass both his brothers in power and opulence. He expired in the sixty-third year of his age, in the twenty-first year of his reign over England, and in the fifty-fourth of that over Normandy.

FEW princes have been more fortunate than this great monarch, or were better entitled to grandeur and prosperity, from the abilities and the vigor of mind which he displayed in all his conduct. His spirit was bold and enterprising, yet guided by prudence: His ambition, which was exorbitant, and lay little under the restraints of justice, still less under those of humanity, ever submitted to the dictates of sound policy. Born in an age when the minds of men were intractable and unacquainted with submission, he was yet able to direct them to his purposes; partly from the ascendant of his vehement character, and partly from art and dissimulation, to establish an unlimited authority. Though not insensible to generosity, he was hardened against compassion; and he seemed equally ostentatious and
equally

equally ambitious of show and parade in his clemency and in his severity. The maxims of his administration were austere; but might have been useful, had they been solely employed to preserve order in an established government⁹⁴. They were ill calculated for softening the rigors, which, under the most gentle management, are inseparable from conquest. His attempt against England was the last great enterprize of the kind, which, during the course of seven hundred years, has fully succeeded in Europe; and the force of his genius broke through those limits, which first the feudal institutions, then the refined policy of princes, have fixed to the several states of Christendom. Though he rendered himself infinitely odious to his English subjects, he transmitted his power to his posterity, and the throne is still filled by his descendants: A proof, that the foundations which he laid were firm and solid, and that, amidst all his violence, while he seemed only to gratify the present passion, he had still an eye towards futurity.

SOME writers have been desirous of refusing to this prince the title of Conqueror, in the sense which that term commonly bears; and on pretence, that the word is sometimes in old books applied to such as make an acquisition of territory by any means, they are willing to reject William's title, by right of war, to the crown of England. It is needless to enter into

⁹⁴ M. West, p. 230. Anglia Sacra, vol. i. p. 258.

C H A P. a controversy, which, by the terms of it, must
 IV. necessarily degenerate into a dispute of words.
 1087. It suffices to say, that the duke of Normandy's
 first invasion of the island was hostile; that his
 subsequent administration was entirely supported
 by arms; that in the very frame of his laws he
 made a distinction between the Normans and
 English, to the advantage of the former⁹⁹; that
 he acted in every thing as absolute master over
 the natives, whose interest and affections he to-
 tally disregarded; and that if there was an
 interval when he assumed the appearance of a
 legal sovereign, the period was very short, and
 was nothing but a temporary sacrifice, which
 he, as has been the case with most conquerors,
 was obliged to make, of his inclination to his
 present policy. Scarce any of those revolutions,
 which, both in history and in common language,
 have always been denominated conquests, appear
 equally violent, or were attended with so sudden
 an alteration both of power and property. The
 Roman state, which spread its dominion over
 Europe, left the rights of individuals, in a great
 measure, untouched; and those civilized con-
 querors, while they made their own country
 the seat of empire, found, that they could draw
 most advantage from the subjected provinces, by
 securing to the natives the free enjoyment of
 their own laws and of their private possessions.
 The barbarians, who subdued the Roman

⁹⁹ Hoveden, p. 600.

empire, though they settled in the conquered countries, yet being accustomed to a rude uncultivated life, found a part only of the land sufficient to supply all their wants; and they were not tempted to seize extensive possessions, which they knew neither how to cultivate nor enjoy. But the Normans and other foreigners, who followed the standard of William, while they made the vanquished kingdom the seat of government, were yet so far advanced in arts as to be acquainted with the advantages of a large property; and having totally subdued the natives, they pushed the rights of conquest (very extensive in the eyes of avarice and ambition, however narrow in those of reason) to the utmost extremity against them. Except the former conquest of England by the Saxons themselves, who were induced, by peculiar circumstances, to proceed even to the extermination of the natives, it would be difficult to find in all history a revolution more destructive, or attended with a more complete subjection of the ancient inhabitants. Contumely seems even to have been wantonly added to oppression⁹⁶; and the natives were universally reduced to such a state of meanness and poverty, that the English name became a term of reproach; and several generations elapsed before one family of Saxon pedigree was raised to any considerable honours, or could so much

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⁹⁶ H. Hunt. p. 370. Brompton, p. 980.

C H A P. as attain the rank of baron of the realm⁹⁷. These
 IV. facts are so apparent from the whole tenor of
 1087. the English history, that none would have been
 tempted to deny or elude them, were they
 not heated by the controversies of faction; while
 one party was *absurdly* afraid of those *absurd*
 consequences, which they saw the other party
 inclined to draw from this event. But it is
 evident, that the present rights and privileges of
 the people, who are a mixture of English and
 Normans, can never be affected by a transac-
 tion, which passed seven hundred years ago;
 and as all ancient authors⁹⁸, who lived nearest
 the time, and best knew the state of the country,
 unanimously speak of the Norman dominion as
 a conquest by war and arms, no reasonable
 man, from the fear of imaginary consequences,
 will ever be tempted to reject their concurring
 and undoubted testimony.

KING William had issue, besides his three sons,
 who survived him, five daughters, to wit, (1.)
 Cicily, a nun in the monastery of Fescamp,
 afterwards abbess in the holy Trinity at Caen,
 where she died in 1127. (2.) Constantia, married

⁹⁷ So late as the reign of king Stephen, the earl of
 Albemarle, before the battle of the Standard, addressed
 the officers of his army in these terms, *Proceres Angliæ*
clarissimi & genere Normanni, &c. See farther Abbas
 Rieval, p. 339. etc. All the barons and military men of
 England still called themselves Normans.

⁹⁸ See note [L] at the end of the volume.

to Alan Fergant, earl of Britanny. She died without issue. (3.) Alice, contracted to Harold. (4.) Adela, married to Stephen, earl of Blois, by whom she had four sons, William, Theobald, Henry, and Stephen; of whom the elder was neglected, on account of the imbecillity of his understanding. (5.) Agatha, who died a virgin, but was betrothed to the king of Gallicia. She died on her journey thither, before she joined her bridegroom.

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CHAP. V.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

Accession of William Rufus — Conspiracy against the King — Invasion of Normandy — The Crusades — Acquisition of Normandy — Quarrel with Anselm, the primate — Death — and character of William Rufus.

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V.

1087.

Accession of
William
Rufus.

WILLIAM, surnamed *Rufus* or the Red, from the colour of his hair, had no sooner procured his father's commendatory letter to Lanfranc, the primate, than he hastened to take measures for securing to himself the government of England. Sensible, that a deed so informal, and so little prepared, which violated Robert's right of primogeniture, might meet with great opposition, he trusted entirely for success to his own celerity; and having left St. Gervais, while William was breathing his last, he arrived in England, before intelligence of his father's death had reached that kingdom¹. Pretending orders from the king, he secured the fortresses of Dover, Pevensey, and Hastings, whose situation rendered them of the greatest importance; and he got possession of the royal treasure at Winchester, amounting to the sum of sixty thousand pounds, by which he hoped to encourage and increase

¹ W. Malmesb. p. 120. M. Paris, p. 10.

his partisans². The primate, whose rank and reputation in the kingdom gave him great authority, had been entrusted with the care of his education, and had conferred on him the honour of knighthood³; and being connected with him by these ties, and probably deeming his pretensions just, declared that he would pay a willing obedience to the last will of the Conqueror, his friend and benefactor. Having assembled some bishops and some of the principal nobility, he instantly proceeded to the ceremony of crowning the new king⁴; and by this dispatch endeavoured to prevent all faction and resistance. At the same time, Robert, who had been already acknowledged successor to Normandy, took peaceable possession of that dutchy.

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BUT though this partition appeared to have been made without any violence or opposition, there remained in England many causes of discontent, which seemed to menace that kingdom with a sudden revolution. The barons, who generally possessed large estates both in England and in Normandy, were uneasy at the separation of those territories; and foresaw, that, as it would be impossible for them to preserve long their allegiance to two masters, they must necessarily resign either their ancient patrimony

Conspiracy
against the
king.

² Chron. Sax. p. 192. Brompton, p. 983.

³ W. Malmesb. p. 120. M. Paris, p. 10. Thom. Rudborne, p. 263.

⁴ Hoveden, p. 461.

CHAP. V. 1087. or their new acquisitions^s. Robert's title to the dutchy they esteemed incontestible; his claim to the kingdom plausible; and they all desired that this prince, who alone had any pretensions to unite these states, should be put in possession of both. A comparison also of the personal qualities of the two brothers led them to give the preference to the elder. The duke was brave, open, sincere, generous: Even his predominant faults, his extreme indolence and facility, were not disagreeable to those haughty barons, who affected independence, and submitted with reluctance to a vigorous administration in their sovereign. The king, though equally brave, was violent, haughty, tyrannical; and seemed disposed to govern more by the fear than by the love of his subjects. Odo, bishop of Baieux, and Robert earl of Mortaigne, maternal brothers of the conqueror, envying the great credit of Lanfranc, which was increased by his late services, enforced all these motives with their partisans, and engaged them in a formal conspiracy to dethrone the king. They communicated their design to Eustace, count of Bologne, Roger earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel, Robert de Belesme, his eldest son, William bishop of Durham, Robert de Moubray, Roger Bigod, Hugh de Grentmesnil; and they easily procured the assent of these potent noblemen. The conspirators, retiring to their castles,

^s Order. Vitalis, p. 666.

hastened to put themselves in a military posture; and expecting to be soon supported by a powerful army from Normandy, they had already begun hostilities in many places.

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THE king, sensible of his perilous situation, endeavoured to engage the affections of the native English. As that people were now so thoroughly subdued that they no longer aspired to the recovery of their ancient liberties, and were content with the prospect of some mitigation in the tyranny of the Norman princes, they zealously embraced William's cause, upon receiving general promises of good treatment, and of enjoying the licence of hunting in the royal forests. The king was soon in a situation to take the field; and as he knew the danger of delay, he suddenly marched into Kent; where his uncles had already seized the fortresses of Pevensey and Rochester. These places he successively reduced by famine; and though he was prevailed on by the earl of Chester, William de Warenne, and Robert Fitz Hammon, who had embraced his cause, to spare the lives of the rebels, he confiscated all their estates, and banished them the kingdom⁶. This success gave authority to his negotiations with Roger earl of Shrewsbury, whom he detached from the confederates: And as his powerful fleet, joined to the indolent conduct of Robert, prevented the arrival of the Norman succours, all the other

⁶ Chron. Sax. p. 195. Order. Vitalis, p. 668.

C H A P. rebels found no resource but in flight or sub-
v. mission. Some of them received a pardon; but
the greater part were attainted; and the king
bestowed their estates on the Norman barons
who had remained faithful to him.

1089.

WILLIAM, freed from the danger of these insurrections, took little care of fulfilling his promises to the English, who still found themselves exposed to the same oppressions, which they had undergone during the reign of the Conqueror, and which were rather augmented by the violent, impetuous temper of the present monarch. The death of Lanfranc, who retained great influence over him, gave soon after a full career to his tyranny; and all orders of men found reason to complain of an arbitrary and illegal administration. Even the privileges of the church, held sacred in those days, were a feeble rampart against his usurpations. He seized the temporalities of all the vacant bishoprics and abbeys; he delayed the appointing of successors to those dignities, that he might the longer enjoy the profits of their revenue; he bestowed some of the church-lands in property on his captains and favourites; and he openly set to sale such fees and abbeys as he thought proper to dispose of. Though the murmurs of the ecclesiastics, which were quickly propagated to the nation, rose high against this grievance, the terror of William's authority, confirmed by the suppression of the late insurrections, retained every one in subjection, and preserved general tranquillity in England.

THE king even thought himself enabled to disturb his brother in the possession of Normandy. The loose and negligent administration of that prince had emboldened the Norman barons to affect a great independency ; and their mutual quarrels and devastations had rendered that whole territory a scene of violence and outrage. Two of them , Walter and Odo , were bribed by William to deliver the fortresses of St. Valeri and Albemarle into his hands ; Others soon after imitated the example of revolt ; while Philip , king of France , who ought to have protected his vassal in the possession of his fief , was , after making some efforts in his favour , engaged by large presents to remain neuter. The duke had also reason to apprehend danger from the intrigues of his brother Henry. This young prince , who had inherited nothing of his father's great possessions but some of his money , had furnished Robert , while he was making his preparations against England , with the sum of three thousand marks ; and in return for so slender a supply , had been put in possession of the Cotentin , which comprehended near a third of the dutchy of Normandy. Robert afterwards upon some suspicion threw him into prison ; but finding himself exposed to invasion from the king of England , and dreading the conjunction of the two brothers against him , he now gave Henry his liberty , and even made use of his assistance in suppressing the insurrections of his rebellious subjects. Conan , a rich burghers of Roüen , had entered into a

C H A P.
V.
1090.
Invasion of
Normandy.

C H A P. conspiracy to deliver that city to William; but
 V. Henry, on the detection of his guilt, carried the
 1090. traitor up to a high tower, and with his own
 hands flung him from the battlements.

THE king appeared in Normandy at the head of an army; and affairs seemed to have come to extremity between the brothers; when the nobility on both sides, strongly connected by interest and alliances, interposed and mediated an accommodation. The chief advantage of this treaty accrued to William, who obtained possession of the territory of Eu, the towns of Aumale, Fescamp, and other places: But in return he promised, that he would assist his brother in subduing Maine, which had rebelled; and that the Norman barons, attainted in Robert's cause, should be restored to their estates in England. The two brothers also stipulated, that, on the demise of either without issue, the survivor should inherit all his dominions; and twelve of the most powerful barons on each side swore, that they would employ their power to insure the effectual execution of the whole treaty: A strong proof of the great independence and authority of the nobles in those ages!

PRINCE Henry, disgusted, that so little care had been taken of his interests in this accom-

Chron. Sax. p. 197. W. Malm. p. 121. Hoveden, p. 462. M. Paris, p. 11. Annal. Waverl. p. 137. W. Heming. p. 463. Sim. Dunelm. p. 216. Brompton, p. 986.

modation, retired to St. Michael's Mount, a strong fortress on the coast of Normandy, and infested the neighbourhood with his incursions. Robert and William with their joint forces besieged him in this place, and had nearly reduced him by the scarcity of water; when the elder, hearing of his distress, granted him permission to supply himself, and also sent him some pipes of wine for his own table. Being reproved by William for this ill-timed generosity, he replied, *What, shall I suffer my brother to die of thirst? Where shall we find another, when he is gone?* The king also, during this siege, performed an act of generosity, which was less suitable to his character. Riding out one day alone, to take a survey of the fortress, he was attacked by two soldiers, and dismounted. One of them drew his sword in order to dispatch him; when the king exclaimed, *Hold knave! I am the king of England.* The soldier suspended his blow; and raising the king from the ground, with expressions of respect, received a handsome reward, and was taken into his service. Prince Henry was soon after obliged to capitulate; and being despoiled of all his patrimony, wandered about for some time with very few attendants, and often in great poverty.

THE continued intestine discord among the barons was alone, in that age, destructive: The public wars were commonly short and feeble, produced little bloodshed, and were attended with no memorable event. To this Norman war,

C H A P. V. which was so soon concluded, there succeeded hostilities with Scotland, which were not of longer duration. Robert here commanded his brother's army, and obliged Malcolm to accept of peace and do homage to the crown of England. This peace was not more durable. Malcolm, two years after, levying an army, invaded England; and after ravaging Northumberland, he laid siege to Alnwick, where a party of earl Mowbray's troops falling upon him by surprise, a sharp action ensued, in which Malcolm was slain. This incident interrupted for some years the regular succession to the Scottish crown. Though Malcolm left legitimate sons, his brother, Donald, on account of the youth of these princes, was advanced to the throne; but kept not long possession of it. Duncan, natural son of Malcolm, formed a conspiracy against him; and being assisted by William with a small force, made himself master of the kingdom. New broils ensued with Normandy. The frank, open, remiss temper of Robert was ill-fitted to withstand the interested, rapacious character of William, who, supported by greater power, was still encroaching on his brother's possessions, and instigating his turbulent barons to rebellion against him. The king, having gone over to Normandy to support his partisans, ordered an army of twenty thousand men to be levied in England, and to be conducted to the sea-coast, as if they were instantly to be embarked. Here Ralph Flambard, the king's minister, and the chief instrument of his extortions,

exacted ten shillings a piece from them, in lieu of their service, and then dismissed them into their several counties. This money was so skilfully employed by William, that it rendered him better service than he could have expected from the army. He engaged the French king by new presents to depart from the protection of Robert; and he daily bribed the Norman barons to desert his service: But was prevented from pushing his advantages by an incursion of the Welsh, which obliged him to return to England. He found no difficulty in repelling the enemy; but was not able to make any considerable impression on a country, guarded by its mountainous situation. A conspiracy of his own barons, which was detected at this time, appeared a more serious concern, and engrossed all his attention. Robert Moubray, earl of Northumberland, was at the head of this combination; and he engaged in it the count d'Eu, Richard de Tunbridge, Roger de Lacey, and many others. The purpose of the conspirators was to dethrone the king, and to advance in his stead, Stephen, count of Aumale, nephew to the Conqueror. William's dispatch prevented the design from taking effect, and disconcerted the conspirators. Moubray made some resistance; but being taken prisoner, was attainted, and thrown into confinement, where he died about thirty years after. The count d'Eu denied his concurrence in the plot; and to justify himself, fought, in the presence of the court at Windsor, a duel with Geoffrey Bainard,

C H A P.

V.

1095.

1096.

C H A P. who, accused him. But being worsted in the
 V. combat, he was condemned to be castrated, and
 1095. to have his eyes put out. William de Alder, another conspirator, was supposed to be treated with more rigor, when he was sentenced to be hanged.

The Cru-
 sades.

BUT the noise of these petty wars and com-
 motions was quite sunk in the tumult of the
 Crusades, which now engrossed the attention of
 Europe, and have ever since engaged the curiosity
 of mankind, as the most signal and most durable
 monument of human folly, that has yet appeared
 in any age or nation. After Mahomet had, by
 means of his pretended revelations, united the
 dispersed Arabians under one head, they issued
 forth from their deserts in great multitudes; and
 being animated with zeal for their new religion,
 and supported by the vigor of their new
 government, they made deep impression on the
 eastern empire, which was far in the decline,
 with regard both to military discipline and to
 civil policy. Jerusalem, by its situation, became
 one of their most early conquests; and the
 Christians had the mortification to see the holy
 sepulchre, and the other places, consecrated by
 the presence of their religious founder, fallen into
 the possession of infidels. But the Arabians or
 Saracens were so employed in military enterprizes,
 by which they spread their empire, in a few
 years, from the banks of the Ganges, to the
 Streights of Gibraltar, that they had no leisure
 for theological controversy: And though the
 Alcoran,

Alcoran, the original monument of their faith, seems to contain some violent precepts, they were much less infected with the spirit of bigotry and persecution than the indolent and speculative Greeks, who were continually refining on the several articles of their religious system. They gave little disturbance to those zealous pilgrims, who daily flocked to Jerufalem; and they allowed every man, after paying a moderate tribute, to visit the holy sepulchre, to perform his religious duties, and to return in peace. But the Turcomans or Turks, a tribe of Tartars, who had embraced Mahometanism, having wrested Syria from the Saracens, and having in the year 1065 made themselves masters of Jerufalem, rendered the pilgrimage much more difficult and dangerous to the Christians. The barbarity of their manners, and the confusions attending their unsettled government, exposed the pilgrims to many insults, robberies, and extortions; and these zealots, returning from their meritorious fatigues and sufferings, filled all Christendom with indignation against the infidels, who profaned the holy city by their presence, and derided the sacred mysteries in the very place of their completion. Gregory VII. among the other vast ideas which he entertained, had formed the design of uniting all the western Christians against the Mahometans; but the egregious and violent invasions of that pontiff on the civil power of princes, had created him so many enemies, and had rendered his schemes so suspicious, that he was not able to make great

C H A P.

V.

1096.

C H A P. progress in this undertaking. The work was reserved for a meaner instrument, whose low condition in life exposed him to no jealousy, and whose folly was well calculated to coincide with the prevailing principles of the times.

PETER, commonly called the Hermit, a native of Amiens in Picardy, had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Being deeply affected with the dangers, to which that act of piety now exposed the pilgrims, as well as with the instances of oppression, under which the eastern Christians laboured, he entertained the bold, and in all appearance, impracticable project of leading into Asia, from the farthest extremities of the West, armies sufficient to subdue those potent and warlike nations, which now held the holy city in subjection⁸. He proposed his views to Martin II. who filled the papal chair, and who, though sensible of the advantages, which the head of the Christian religion must reap from a religious war, and though he esteemed the blind zeal of Peter a proper means for effecting the purpose⁹, resolved not to interpose his authority, till he saw a greater probability of success. He summoned a council at Placentia, which consisted of four thousand ecclesiastics and thirty thousand seculars; and which was so numerous, that no hall could contain the multitude, and it was necessary to hold the assembly in a plain. The harangues of

⁸ Gul. Tyrius, lib. I. cap. 11. M. Paris, p. 17.

⁹ Gul. Tyrius, lib. I cap. 13.

the pope, and of Peter himself, representing the
dismal situation of their brethren in the east, and
the indignity, suffered by the Christian name,
in allowing the holy city to remain in the hands
of infidels, here found the minds of men so well
prepared, that the whole multitude, suddenly
and violently, declared for the war, and solemnly
devoted themselves to perform this service, so
meritorious, as they believed it, to God and
religion.

BUT though Italy seemed thus to have zealously
embraced the enterprize, Martin knew, that, in
order to insure success, it was necessary to enlist
the greater and more warlike nations in the same
engagement; and having previously exhorted
Peter to visit the chief cities and sovereigns of
Christendom, he summoned another council at
Clermont in Auvergne ¹⁰. The fame of this
great and pious design, being now universally
diffused, procured the attendance of the greatest
prelates, nobles, and princes; and when the
pope and the hermit renewed their pathetic ex-
hortations, the whole assembly, as if impelled by an
immediate inspiration, not moved by their preceding
impressions, exclaimed with one voice, *It is the
will of God, It is the will of God*: Words deemed
so memorable, and so much the result of a divine
influence, that they were employed as the signal
of rendez-vous and battle in all the future exploits

¹⁰ Concil. tom. x. Concil. Clarem. Matth. Paris, p. 16.
M. West. p. 233.

C H A P. of those adventurers ¹¹. Men of all ranks flew
 V. to arms with the utmost ardour ; and an exterior
 1096. symbol too, a circumstance of chief moment,
 was here chosen by the devoted combatants.
 The sign of the cross, which had been hitherto
 so much revered among Christians, and which,
 the more it was an object of reproach among the
 pagan world, was the more passionately cherished
 by them, became the badge of union, and was
 affixed to their right shoulder, by all who enlisted
 themselves in this sacred warfare ¹².

EUROPE was at this time sunk into profound
 ignorance and superstition : The ecclesiastics had
 acquired the greatest ascendant over the human
 mind : The people, who, being little restrained
 by honour, and less by law, abandoned them-
 selves to the worst crimes and disorders, knew
 of no other expiation than the observances im-
 posed on them by their spiritual pastors : And
 it was easy to represent the holy war as an
 equivalent for all penances ¹³, and an atonement
 for every violation of justice and humanity. But
 amidst the abject superstition, which now pre-
 vailed, the military spirit also had universally
 diffused itself; and though not supported by art
 or discipline, was become the general passion of
 the nations, governed by the feudal law. All
 the great lords possessed the right of peace and

¹¹ Historia Belli Sacri, tom. 1. Musæi Ital.

¹² Hist. Belli Sacri, tom. 1. Mus. Ital. Order. Vital.
 p. 721.

¹³ Ibid. p. 720.

war: They were engaged in perpetual hostilities with each other: The open country was become a scene of outrage and disorder: The cities, still mean and poor, were neither guarded by walls, nor protected by privileges, and were exposed to every insult: Individuals were obliged to depend for safety on their own force, or their private alliances: And valour was the only excellence, which was held in esteem, or gave one man the pre-eminence above another. When all the particular superstitions, therefore, were here united in one great object, the ardour for military enterprizes took the same direction; and Europe, impelled by its two ruling passions, was loosened, as it were, from its foundations, and seemed to precipitate itself in one united body upon the east.

ALL orders of men, deeming the crusades the only road to heaven, enlisted themselves under these sacred banners, and were impatient to open the way with their sword to the holy city. Nobles, artificers, peasants, even priests¹⁴ enrolled their names; and to decline this meritorious service was branded with the reproach of impiety, or what perhaps was esteemed still more disgraceful, of cowardice and pusillanimity¹⁵. The infirm and aged contributed to the expedition by presents and money; and many of them, not satisfied with the merit of this atonement, attended it in person, and were determined, if possible, to breathe their

¹⁴ Order. Vital. p. 720.

¹⁵ W. Malm. p. 133.

C H A P. V. 1036. last, in sight of that city where their Saviour had died for them. Women themselves, concealing their sex under the disguise of armour, attended the camp; and commonly forgot still more the duty of their sex, by prostituting themselves, without reserve, to the army¹⁶. The greatest criminals were forward in a service, which they regarded as a propitiation for all crimes; and the most enormous disorders were, during the course of those expeditions, committed by men, inured to wickedness, encouraged by example, and impelled by necessity. The multitude of the adventurers soon became so great, that their more sagacious leaders, Hugh count of Vermandois, brother to the French king, Raymond count of Toulouse, Godfrey of Bouillon, prince of Brabant, and Stephen count of Blois¹⁷, became apprehensive lest the greatness itself of the armament should disappoint its purpose; and they permitted an undisciplined multitude, computed at 300,000 men, to go before them, under the command of Peter the Hermit, and Walter the Moneyless¹⁸. These men took the road towards Constantinople through Hungary and Bulgaria; and trusting, that Heaven, by supernatural assistance, would supply all their necessities, they made no provision for subsistence on their march. They soon found themselves obliged to obtain by plunder what they had vainly expected from miracles; and the enraged

¹⁶ Vertot Hist. des Chev. de Malte, vol. i. p. 46.

¹⁷ Sim. Dunelm, p. 222.

¹⁸ Matth. Paris, p. 17.

inhabitants of the countries through which they passed, gathering together in arms, attacked the disorderly multitude, and put them to slaughter without resistance. The more disciplined armies followed after; and passing the streights at Constantinople, they were mustered in the plains of Asia, and amounted in the whole to the number of 700,000 combatants¹⁹.

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V.

1096.

AMIDST this universal frenzy, which spread itself by contagion throughout Europe, especially in France and Germany, men were not entirely forgetful of their present interests; and both those who went on this expedition, and those who stayed behind, entertained schemes of gratifying, by its means, their avarice or their ambition. The nobles who enlisted themselves were moved, from the romantic spirit of the age, to hope for opulent establishments in the east, the chief seat of arts and commerce during those ages; and in pursuit of these chimerical projects, they sold at the lowest price their ancient castles and inheritances, which had now lost all value in their eyes. The greater princes, who remained at home, besides establishing peace in their dominions by giving occupation abroad to the inquietude and martial disposition of their subjects, took the opportunity of annexing to their crown many considerable fiefs, either by purchase or by the extinction of heirs. The pope frequently turned the zeal of the crusaders from the infidels against his own

¹⁹ Matth. Paris, p. 20, 21.

C H A P. V. 1096. enemies, whom he represented as equally criminal with the enemies of Christ. The convents and other religious societies bought the possessions of the adventurers; and as the contributions of the faithful were commonly intrusted to their management, they often diverted to this purpose what was intended to be employed against the infidels²⁰. But no one was a more immediate gainer by this epidemic fury than the king of England, who kept aloof from all connexions with those fanatical and romantic warriors.

Acquisition
of Nor-
mandy.

ROBERT, duke of Normandy, impelled by the bravery and mistaken generosity of his spirit, had early enlisted himself in the crusade; but being always unprovided with money, he found, that it would be impracticable for him to appear in a manner suitable to his rank and station, at the head of his numerous vassals and subjects, who, transported with the general rage, were determined to follow him into Asia. He resolved, therefore, to mortgage or rather to sell his dominions, which he had not talents to govern; and he offered them to his brother William, for the very unequal sum of ten thousand marks²¹. The bargain was soon concluded: The king raised the money by violent extortions on his subjects of all ranks, even on the convents,

²⁰ Padre Paolo Hist. dei benef. ecclesiast. p. 128.

²¹ W. Malm. p. 123. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 24. Annal. Waverl. p. 139. W. Heming. p. 467. Flor. Wig. p. 648. Sim. Dunelm. p. 222. Knyghton, p. 2364.

who were obliged to melt their plate in order to furnish the quota demanded of them²² : He was put in possession of Normandy and Maine ; and Robert , providing himself with a magnificent train , set out for the Holy Land , in pursuit of glory ; and in full confidence of securing his eternal salvation.

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THE smallness of this sum , with the difficulties which William found in raising it , suffices alone to refute the account which is heedlessly adopted by historians , of the enormous revenue of the conqueror. Is it credible , that Robert would consign to the rapacious hands of his brother such considerable dominions , for a sum , which , according to that account , made not a week's income of his father's English revenue alone ? Or that the king of England could not on demand , without oppressing his subjects , have been able to pay him the money ? The conqueror , it is agreed , was frugal as well as rapacious ; yet his treasure , at his death , exceeded not 60,000 pounds , which hardly amounted to his income for two months : Another certain refutation of that exaggerated account.

THE fury of the crusades , during this age , less infected England than the neighbouring kingdoms ; probably because the Norman conquerors , finding their settlement in that kingdom still somewhat precarious , durst not abandon their homes , in

²² Eadmer , p. 35. W. Malm. p. 123. W. Heming , p. 467.

C H A P. V. 1096. quest of distant adventures. The selfish interested spirit also of the king, which kept him from kindling in the general flame, checked its progress among his subjects; and as he is accused of open profaneness²³, and was endued with a sharp wit²⁴, it is likely that he made the romantic chivalry of the crusaders the object of his perpetual raillery. As an instance of his irreligion; we are told, that he once accepted of sixty marks from a Jew, whose son had been converted to Christianity, and who engaged him by that present to assist him in bringing back the youth to Judaism. William employed both menaces and persuasion for that purpose; but finding the convert obstinate in his new faith, he sent for the father, and told him, that as he had not succeeded, it was not just that he should keep the present; but as he had done his utmost, it was but equitable that he should be paid for his pains; and he would therefore retain only thirty marks of the money²⁵. At another time, it is said, he sent for some learned Christian theologians and some rabbies, and bade them fairly dispute the question of their religion in his presence: He was perfectly indifferent between them; had his ears open to reason and conviction; and would embrace that doctrine which upon comparison should be found supported by the most solid arguments²⁶. If this

²³ G. Newbr. p. 358. W. Gemet. p. 292.

²⁴ W. Malm. p. 122. ²⁵ Eadmer, p. 47.

²⁶ W. Malm. p. 123.

story be true, it is probable that he meant only to amuse himself by turning both into ridicule: But we must be cautious of admitting every thing related by the monkish historians to the disadvantage of this prince: He had the misfortune to be engaged in quarrels with the ecclesiastics, particularly with Anselm, commonly called St. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury; and it is no wonder his memory should be blackened by the historians of that order.

AFTER the death of Lanfranc, the king, for several years, retained in his own hands the revenues of Canterbury, as he did those of many other vacant bishoprics: but falling into a dangerous sickness, he was seized with remorse, and the clergy represented to him, that he was in danger of eternal perdition, if before his death he did not make atonement for those multiplied impieties and sacrileges, of which he had been guilty²⁷. He resolved therefore to supply instantly the vacancy of Canterbury; and for that purpose he sent for Anselm, a Piedmontese by birth, abbot of Bec in Normandy, who was much celebrated for his learning and piety. The abbot earnestly refused the dignity, fell on his knees, wept, and entreated the king to change his purpose²⁸, and when he found the prince obstinate in forcing the pastoral staff upon him, he kept his fist so fast clenched, that it required the

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Quarrel
with An-
selm, the
primate.

²⁷ Eadmer, p. 16. Chron. Sax. p. 198.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 17. Diceto, p. 494.

C H A P. V. 1096. utmost violence of the bystanders to open it, and force him to receive that ensign of spiritual dignity ²⁹. William soon after recovered ; and his passions regaining their wonted vigor , he returned to his former violence and rapine. He detained in prison several persons whom he had ordered to be freed during the time of his penitence ; he still preyed upon the ecclesiastical benefices ; the sale of spiritual dignities continued as open as ever ; and he kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury ³⁰. But he found in Anselm that persevering opposition, which he had reason to expect from the ostentatious humility , which that prelate had displayed in refusing his promotion.

THE opposition, made by Anselm , was the more dangerous on account of the character of piety , which he soon acquired in England , by his great zeal against all abuses , particularly those in dress and ornament. There was a mode , which, in that age , prevailed throughout Europe, both among men and women , to give an enormous length to their shoes , to draw the toe to a sharp point , and to affix to it the figure of a bird's bill , or some such ornament , which was turned upwards , and which was often sustained by gold or silver chains tied to the knee ³¹. The ecclesiastics took exception at this ornament , which ,

²⁹ Eadmer , p. 18. ³⁰ Ibid. p. 18. 43. Chron. Sax. p. 199. ³¹ Order. Vital. p. 682. W. Malmesf. p. 123. Knyghton , p. 2396.

they said, was an attempt to bely the Scripture, where it is affirmed, that no man can add a cubit to his stature; and they declaimed against it with great vehemence, nay assembled some synods, who absolutely condemned it. But, such are the strange contradictions in human nature! though the clergy, at that time, could overturn thrones, and had authority sufficient to send above a million of men on *their* errand to the desarts of Asia, they could never prevail against these long-pointed shoes: On the contrary, that caprice, contrary to all other modes, maintained its ground during several centuries; and if the clergy had not at last desisted from their persecution of it, it might still have been the prevailing fashion in Europe.

BUT Anselm was more fortunate in decrying the particular mode, which was the object of his aversion, and which probably had not taken such fast hold of the affections of the people. He preached zealously against the long hair and curled locks, which were then fashionable among the courtiers; he refused the ashes on Ash-Wednesday to those who were so accoutred; and his authority and eloquence had such influence, that the young men universally abandoned that ornament, and appeared in the cropt hair, which was recommended to them by the sermons of the primate. The noted historian of Anselm, who was also his companion and secretary, celebrates highly this effort of his zeal and piety¹².

¹² Eadmer, p. 23.

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WHEN William's profaneness therefore returned to him with his health, he was soon engaged in controversies with this austere prelate. There was at that time a schism in the church, between Urban and Clement, who both pretended to the papacy³³, and Anselm, who, as abbot of Bec, had already acknowledged the former, was determined, without the king's consent, to introduce his authority into England³⁴. William, who, imitating his father's example, had prohibited his subjects from recognising any pope, whom he had not previously received, was enraged at this attempt; and summoned a synod at Rockingham, with an intention of deposing Anselm: But the prelate's suffragans declared, that, without the papal authority, they knew of no expedient for inflicting that punishment on their primate³⁵. The king was at last engaged by other motives to give the preference to Urban's title; Anselm received the pall from that pontiff; and matters seemed to be accommodated between the king and the primate³⁶, when the quarrel broke out afresh from a new cause. William had undertaken an expedition against Wales, and required the archbishop to furnish his quota of soldiers for that service; but Anselm, who regarded the demand as an oppression on the church, and yet durst not refuse compliance, sent them so miserably

³³ Hoveden, p. 463.³⁴ Eadmer, p. 25. M. Paris, p. 13. Diceto, p. 494. Spellm. Conc. vol. 11. p. 16.³⁵ Eadmer, p. 30.³⁶ Diceto, p. 495.

accoutred, that the king was extremely displeased, and threatened him with a prosecution³⁷. Anselm, on the other hand, demanded positively that all the revenues of his see should be restored to him; appealed to Rome against the king's injustice³⁸; and affairs came to such extremities, that the primate, finding it dangerous to remain in the kingdom, desired and obtained the king's permission to retire beyond sea. All his temporalities were seized³⁹; but he was received with great respect by Urban, who considered him as a martyr in the cause of religion, and even menaced the king, on account of his proceedings against the primate and the church, with the sentence of excommunication. Anselm assisted at the council of Bari, where, besides fixing the controversy between the Greek and Latin churches, concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost⁴⁰, the right of election to church preferments was declared to belong to the clergy alone, and spiritual censures were denounced against all ecclesiastics, who did homage to laymen for their fees or benefices, and against all laymen who exacted it⁴¹. The rite of homage, by the feudal customs, was, that the vassal should throw himself on his knees, should put his joined hands between those of his superior, and should in that posture swear fealty

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V.
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³⁷ Eadmer, p. 37. 43.

³⁸ Ibid. p. 40.

³⁹ M. Paris, p. 13. Parker, p. 178.

⁴⁰ Eadmer, p. 49. M. Paris, p. 13. Sim. Dun. p. 224

⁴¹ M. Paris, p. 14.

C H A P. to him ⁴². But the council declared it execrable, v. that pure hands, which could create God, and could offer him up as a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind, should be put, after this humiliating manner, between profane hands, which, besides being inured to rapine and bloodshed, were employed day and night in impure purposes and obscene contacts ⁴³. Such were the reasonings prevalent in that age; reasonings, which, though they cannot be passed over in silence, without omitting the most curious and, perhaps, not the least instructive part of history, can scarcely be delivered with the requisite decency and gravity.

1097.

THE cession of Normandy and Maine by duke Robert increased the king's territories; but brought him no great increase of power, because of the unsettled state of those countries, the mutinous disposition of the barons, and the vicinity of the French king, who supported them in all their insurrections. Even Helie, lord of la Fleche, a small town in Anjou, was able to give him inquietude; and this great monarch was obliged to make several expeditions abroad, without being able to prevail over so petty a baron, who had acquired the confidence and affections of the inhabitants of Maine. He was, however, so fortunate, as at last to take him prisoner in a rencounter; but having released him, at the

⁴² Spellman, Du Cange, in verb. *Hominium*.

⁴³ W. Heming, p. 467. Flor. Wigorn. p. 649. Sim. Dunelm, p. 224. Brompton, p. 994.

intercession

intercession of the French king and the count of Anjou, he found the province of Maine still exposed to his intrigues and incursions. Helie, being introduced by the citizens into the town of Mans, besieged the garrison in the citadel, William, who was hunting in the new forest, when he received intelligence of this hostile attempt, was so provoked, that he immediately turned his horse, and galloped to the sea-shore at Dartmouth; declaring, that he would not stop a moment till he had taken vengeance for the offence. He found the weather so cloudy and tempestuous, that the mariners thought it dangerous to put to sea: But the king hurried on board, and ordered them to set sail instantly; telling them that they never yet heard of a king that was drowned⁴⁴. By this vigor and celerity, he delivered the citadel of Mans from its present danger; and pursuing Helie into his own territories, he laid siege to Majol, a small castle in those parts: But a wound, which he received before this place, obliged him to raise the siege; and he returned to England.

THE weakness of the greatest monarchs, during this age, in their military expeditions against their nearest neighbours, appears the more surprising, when we consider the prodigious numbers, which even petty princes, seconding the enthusiastic rage of the people, were able to assemble, and to conduct

⁴⁴ W. Malm. p. 124. H. Hunt. p. 378. M. Paris, p. 36. Ypod. Neust. p. 442.

C H A P. in dangerous enterprizes to the remote provinces
 V. of Asia. William, earl of Poitiers and duke of
 1100. Guienne, enflamed with the glory, and not
 discouraged by the misfortunes, which had attended
 the former adventurers in the crusades, had put
 himself at the head of an immense multitude,
 computed by some historians to amount to 60,000
 horse, and a much greater number of foot⁴⁵, and
 he purposed to lead them into the Holy Land
 against the infidels. He wanted money to forward
 the preparations requisite for this expedition, and
 he offered to mortgage all his dominions to Wil-
 liam, without entertaining any scruple on account
 of that rapacious and iniquitous hand, to which he
 resolved to consign them⁴⁶. The king accepted
 the offer; and had prepared a fleet, and an army,
 in order to escort the money, and take possession
 of the rich provinces of Guienne and Poictou;
 2d August. when an accident put an end to his life, and to
 all his ambitious projects. He was engaged in
 hunting, the sole amusement, and indeed the chief
 occupation of princes in those rude times, when
 society was little cultivated, and the arts afforded
 few objects worthy of attention. Walter Tyrrel,
 a French gentleman, remarkable for his address
 in archery, attended him in this recreation, of
 which the new forest was the scene; and as
 William had dismounted after a chace, Tyrrel,

⁴⁵ W. Malm. p. 149. The whole is said, by Order. Vital. p. 789, to amount to 500,000 men.

⁴⁶ W. Malmes. p. 127.

impatient to show his dexterity, let fly an arrow at a stag, which suddenly started before him. The arrow, glancing from a tree, struck the king in the breast, and instantly flew him⁴⁷; while Tyrrel, without informing any one of the accident, put spurs to his horse, hastened to the sea-shore, embarked for France, and joined the crusade in an expedition to Jerusalem; a penance, which he imposed on himself for this involuntary crime. The body of William was found in the forest by the country-people, and was buried without any pomp or ceremony at Winchester. His courtiers were negligent in performing the last duties to a master who was so little beloved; and every one was too much occupied in the interesting object of fixing his successor, to attend the funerals of a dead sovereign.

THE memory of this monarch is transmitted to us with little advantage by the churchmen, whom he had offended; and though we may suspect in general, that their account of his vices is somewhat exaggerated, his conduct affords little reason for contradicting the character which they have assigned him, or for attributing to him any very estimable qualities. He seems to have been a violent and tyrannical prince; a perfidious, encroaching, and dangerous neighbour; an unkind and ungenerous relation. He was equally prodigal and rapacious in the management of his treasury;

C H A P.
V.
1100.
Death,

and character of William Rufus.

⁴⁷ W. Malm. p. 126. H. Hunt. p. 378. M. Paris, p. 37. Petr. Blef. p. 110.

C H A P. and if he possessed abilities, he lay so much
 V. under the government of impetuous passions,
 1100. that he made little use of them in his administration;
 and he indulged, without reserve, that domineering
 policy, which suited his temper, and which, if
 supported, as it was in him, with courage and
 vigor, proves often more successful in disorderly
 times, than the deepest foresight and most
 refined artifice.

THE monuments which remained of this prince
 in England are the Tower, Westminster-hall,
 and London-bridge, which he built. The most
 laudable foreign enterprize which he undertook,
 was the sending of Edgar Atheling, three years
 before his death, into Scotland with a small
 army, to restore prince Edgar the true heir of
 that kingdom, son of Malcolm, and of Margaret,
 sister of Edgar Atheling; and the enterprize proved
 successful. It was remarked in that age, that
 Richard, an elder brother of William's, perished
 by an accident in the new forest; Richard, his
 nephew, natural son of duke Robert, lost his
 life in the same place, after the same manner:
 And all men, upon the king's fate, exclaimed,
 that, as the Conqueror had been guilty of extreme
 violence, in expelling all the inhabitants of that
 large district, to make room for his game, the
 just vengeance of heaven was signalized, in the
 same place, by the slaughter of his posterity.
 William was killed in the thirteenth year of his
 reign, and about the fortieth of his age. As he
 was never married, he left no legitimate issue.

IN the eleventh year of this reign, Magnus C H A P.
king of Norway made a descent on the isle of V.
Anglesea; but was repulsed by Hugh, earl of 1100.
Shrewsbury. This is the last attempt made by
the northern nations upon England. That restless
people seem about this time to have learned the
practice of tillage, which thenceforth kept them
at home, and freed the other nations of Europe
from the devastations spread over them by those
piratical invaders. This proved one great cause
of the subsequent settlement and improvement of
the southern nations.

N O T E S
TO THE
F I R S T V O L U M E.

NOTE [A], p. 15.

THIS question has been disputed with as great zeal and even acrimony between the Scotch and Irish antiquaries, as if the honour of their respective countries were the most deeply concerned in the decision. We shall not enter into any detail on so uninteresting a subject; but shall propose our opinion in a few words. It appears more than probable, from the similitude of language and manners, that Britain either was originally peopled, or was subdued, by the migration of inhabitants from Gaul, and Ireland from Britain: The position of the several countries, is an additional reason that favours this conclusion. It appears also probable, that the migrations of that colony of Gauls or Celts, who peopled or subdued Ireland, was originally made from the north-west parts of Britain; and this conjecture (if it do not merit a higher name) is founded both on the Irish language, which is a very different dialect from the Welsh and from the language anciently spoken in South Britain, and on the vicinity of Lancashire, Cumberland, Galloway and Argyleshire to that island. These events, as they passed long before the age of history and records, must be known by reasoning alone, which in this case seems to be pretty satisfactory: Cæsar and Tacitus, not to mention a multitude of other Greek and Roman authors, were guided by like inferences. But besides these primitive facts, which lie in a very remote antiquity, it is a matter of positive and undoubted testimony, that the Roman province of Britain, during the time of the lower empire, was much

infested by bands of robbers or pirates, whom the provincial Britons called Scots or Scuits; a name which was probably used as a term of reproach, and which these banditti themselves did not acknowledge or assume. We may infer from two passages in Claudian, and from one in Orosius and another in Isidore, that the chief seat of these Scots was in Ireland. That some part of the Irish freebooters migrated back to the north-west parts of Britain, whence their ancestors had probably been derived in a more remote age, is positively asserted by Bede, and implied in Gildas. I grant, that neither Bede nor Gildas are Cæsar or Tacitus; but such as they are, they remain the sole testimony on the subject, and therefore must be relied on for want of better: Happily, the frivolousness of the question corresponds to the weakness of the authorities. Not to mention, that, if any part of the traditional history of a barbarous people can be relied on, it is the genealogy of nations, and even sometimes that of families. It is in vain to argue against these facts from the supposed warlike disposition of the Highlanders and unwarlike of the ancient Irish. Those arguments are still much weaker than the authorities. Nations change very quickly in these particulars. The Britons were unable to resist the Picts and Scots, and invited over the Saxons for their defence, who repelled those invaders: Yet the same Britons valiantly resisted for 150 years not only this victorious band of Saxons, but infinite numbers more, who poured in upon them from all quarters. Robert Bruce in 1322 made a peace, in which England, after many defeats, was constrained to acknowledge the independence of his country: Yet in no more distant period than ten years after, Scotland was totally subdued by a small handful of English, led by a few private noblemen. All history is full of such events. The Irish Scots, in the course of two or three centuries, might find time and opportunities sufficient to settle in North Britain, though we can neither assign the period nor causes of that revolution. Their barbarous manner of life rendered them

much fitter than the Romans for subduing these mountaineers. And in a word, it is clear, from the language of the two countries, that the Highlanders and the Irish are the same people, and that the one are a colony from the other. We have positive evidence, which, though from neutral persons, is not perhaps the best that may be wished for, that the former, in the third or fourth century, sprang from the latter: We have no evidence at all that the latter sprang from the former. I shall add, that the name of Erse or Irish, given by the low-country Scots to the language of the Scotch Highlanders, is a certain proof of the traditional opinion, delivered from father to son, that the latter people came originally from Ireland.

NOTE [B], p. 156.

THERE is a seeming contradiction in ancient historians with regard to some circumstances in the story of Edwy and Elgiva. It is agreed, that this prince had a violent passion for his second or third cousin, Elgiva, whom he married, though within the degrees prohibited by the canons. It is also agreed, that he was dragged from a lady on the day of his coronation, and that the lady was afterwards treated with the singular barbarity above mentioned. The only difference is, that Osborne and some others call her his strumpet, not his wife, as she is said to be by Malmesbury. But this difference is easily reconciled: For if Edwy married her contrary to the canons, the monks would be sure to deny her to be his wife, and would insist that she could be nothing but his strumpet: So that, on the whole, we may esteem this representation of the matter as certain; at least, as by far the most probable. If Edwy had only kept a mistress, it is well known, that there are methods of accommodation with the church, which would have prevented the clergy from proceeding to such extremities against him: But his marriage, contrary to the canons, was an insult on their authority, and called for their highest resentment.

NOTE [C], p. 156.

MANY of the English historians make Edgar's ships amount to an extravagant number, to 3000, or 3600: See Hoveden, p. 426. Flor. Wigorn. p. 607. Abbas Rieval. p. 360. Brompton, p. 869, says that Edgar had 4000 vessels. How can these accounts be reconciled to probability, and to the state of the navy in the time of Alfred? W. Thorne makes the whole number amount only to 300, which is more probable. The fleet of Ethelred, Edgar's son, must have been short of 1000 ships; yet the Saxon Chronicle, p. 137., says it was the greatest navy that ever had been seen in England.

NOTE [D], p. 187.

ALMOST all the ancient historians speak of this massacre of the Danes as if it had been universal, and as if every individual of that nation throughout England had been put to death. But the Danes were almost the sole inhabitants in the kingdoms of Northumberland and East Anglia, and were very numerous in Mercia. This representation therefore of the matter is absolutely impossible. Great resistance must have been made, and violent wars ensued; which was not the case. This account given by Wallingford, though he stands single, must be admitted as the only true one. We are told, that the name *Lurdane*, *lord Dane*, for an idle lazy fellow, who lives at other people's expence, came from the conduct of the Danes, who were put to death. But the English princes had been intirely masters for several generations; and only supported a military corps of that nation. It seems probable, therefore, that it was these Danes only that were put to death.

NOTE [E], p. 221.

THE ingenious author of the article GODWIN, in the Biographia Britannica, has endeavoured to clear the

memory of that nobleman, upon the supposition, that all the English annals had been falsified by the Norman historians after the conquest. But that this supposition has not much foundation, appears hence, that almost all these historians have given a very good character of his son Harold, whom it was much more the interest of the Norman cause to blacken.

NOTE [F], p. 235.

THE whole story of the transactions between Edward, Harold, and the duke of Normandy, is told so differently by the ancient writers, that there are few important passages of the English history liable to so great uncertainty. I have followed the account, which appeared to me the most consistent and probable. It does not seem likely, that Edward ever executed a will in the duke's favour, much less that he got it ratified by the states of the kingdom, as is affirmed by some. The will would have been known to all, and would have been produced by the Conqueror, to whom it gave so plausible, and really so just a title; but the doubtful and ambiguous manner in which he seems always to have mentioned it, proves, that he could only plead the known intentions of that monarch in his favour, which he was desirous to call a will. There is indeed a charter of the Conqueror preserved by Dr. Hickes, vol. i. where he calls himself *rex hereditarius*, meaning heir by will; but a prince, possessed of so much power, and attended with so much success, may employ what pretence he pleases: It is sufficient to refute his pretences to observe, that there is a great difference and variation among historians with regard to a point, which, had it been real, must have been agreed upon by all of them.

Again, some historians, particularly Malmesbury and Matthew of Westminster, affirm that Harold had no intention of going over to Normandy, but that taking the air in a pleasure-boat on the coast, he was driven over

by stress of weather to the territories of Guy, count of Ponthieu: But besides that this story is not probable in itself, and is contradicted by most of the ancient historians, it is contradicted by a very curious and authentic monument lately discovered. It is a tapestry, preserved in the ducal palace of Rouen, and supposed to have been wrought by orders of Matilda, wife to the Conqueror: At least it is of very great antiquity. Harold is there represented as taking his departure from king Edward in execution of some commission, and mounting his vessel with a great train. The design of redeeming his brother and nephew, who were hostages is the most likely cause that can be assigned; and is accordingly mentioned by Eadmer, Hoveden, Brompton, and Simeon of Durham. For a farther account of this piece of tapestry, see *Histoire de l'Académie de Littérature*, tom. ix. page 535.

NOTE [G], p. 264.

IT appears from the ancient translations of the Saxon annals and laws, and from king Alfred's translation of Bede, as well as from all the ancient historians, that *comes* in Latin, *alderman* in Saxon, and *earl* in Dano-Saxon were quite synonymous. There is only a clause in a law of king Athelstan's, (see *Spellm. Conc.* p. 406.) which has stumbled some antiquaries, and has made them imagine that an earl was superior to an alderman. The weregild or the price of an earl's blood is there fixed at 15000 thrimfas, equal to that of an archbishop; whereas that of a bishop and alderman is only 8000 thrimfas. To solve this difficulty we must have recourse to Selden's conjecture, (see his *Titles of Honour*, chap. v. p. 603, 604.) that the term of earl was in the age of Athelstan just beginning to be in use in England, and stood at that time for the atheling or prince of the blood, heir to the crown. This he confirms by a law of Canute, § 55. where an atheling and an archbishop are put upon the same footing. In another law of the same Athelstan the

weregild of the prince or atheling is said to be 15000 thrimfas. See Wilkins, p. 71. He is therefore the same who is called earl in the former law.

NOTE [H], p. 331.

THERE is a paper or record of the family of Sharneborne, which pretends, that that family, which was Saxon, was restored upon proving their innocence, as well as other Saxon families, which were in the same situation. Though this paper was able to impose on such great antiquaries as Spellman (see Gloss. in verbo *Drenge*) and Dugdale, (see Baron. vol. i. p. 118.) it is proved by Dr. Brady (see Answ. to Petyt, p. 11, 12.) to have been a forgery; and is allowed as such by Tyrrel, though a pertinacious defender of his party-notions (see his hist. vol. ii. introd. p. 51. 73.) Ingulf, p. 70. tells us, that very early, Hereward, though absent during the time of the conquest, was turned out of all his estate, and could not obtain redress. William even plundered the monasteries. Flor. Wigorn. p. 636. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 48. M. Paris, p. 5. Sim. Dun. p. 200. Diceto, p. 482. Brompton, p. 967. Knyghton, p. 2344. Alur. Beverl. p. 130. We are told by Ingulf, that Ivo de Taillebois plundered the monastery of Croyland of a great part of its land, and no redress could be obtained.

NOTE [I], p. 332.

THE obliging of all the inhabitants to put out their fires and lights at certain hours, upon the sounding of a bell, called the *courfeu*, is represented by Polydore Virgil, lib. 9. as a mark of the servitude of the English. But this was a law of police, which William had previously established in Normandy. See du Moulin, hist. de Normandie, p. 160. The same law had place in Scotland. LL. Burgor. cap. 86.

NOTE [K], p. 341.

WHAT these laws were of Edward the Confessor, which the English, every reign during a century and a half, desire so passionately to have restored, is much disputed by antiquaries, and our ignorance of them seems one of the greatest defects in the ancient English history. The collection of laws in Wilkins, which pass under the name of Edward, are plainly a posterior and an ignorant compilation. Those to be found in Ingulf are genuine; but so imperfect, and contain so few clauses favourable to the subject, that we see no great reason for their contending for them so vehemently. It is probable, that the English meant the *common law*, as it prevailed during the reign of Edward; which we may conjecture to have been more indulgent to liberty than the Norman institutions. The most material articles of it were afterwards comprehended in Magna Charta.

NOTE [L], p. 372.

INGULF, p. 70. H. Hunt. p. 370, 372. M. West. p. 225. Gul. Neub. p. 357. Alured. Beverl. p. 124. De gest. Angl. p. 333. M. Paris, p. 4. Sim. Dun. p. 206. Brompton, p. 962. 980. 1161. Gervase Tilb. lib. 1. cap. 16. Textus Roffensis apud Seld. Spicileg. ad Eadm. p. 197. Gul. Pict. p. 206. Ordericus Vitalis, p. 521. 666. 853. Epist. St. Thom. p. 801. Gul. Malmes. p. 52. 57. Knyghton, p. 2354. Eadmer, p. 110. Thom. Rudborne in Ang. Sacra, vol. i. p. 248. Monach. Roff. in Ang. Sacra, vol. ii. p. 276. Girald. Camb. in eadem, vol. ii. p. 413. Hist. Elyensis, p. 516. The words of this last historian, who is very ancient, are remarkable, and worth transcribing. *Rex itaque factus Willielmus, quid in principes Anglorum, qui tantæ cladi superesse poterant, fecerit, dicere, cum nihil profit, omitto. Quid enim prodesset, si nec unum in toto regno de illis dicerem pristina potestate uti permissum, sed omnes aut*

*in gravem paupertatis ærumnam detrusos, aut exha-
redatos, patriâ pulsos, aut effossis oculis, vel cæteris
amputatis membris, opprobrium hominum factos, aut
certe miserrime afflictos, vitâ privatos. Simili modo
utilitate carere existimo dicere quid in minorem populum,
non solum ab eo, sed a suis actum sit, cum id dictu
sciamus difficile, et ob immanem crudelitatem fortassis
incredibile.*

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